

6 Afghan groups agree on peace formula

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (R) — Six Afghan Mujahadeen groups have agreed on a peace formula that calls for a ceasefire in the current fighting in Kabul and elections in less than a year, Mujahadeen sources said here Sunday. The Pakistani and Saudi ambassadors to Afghanistan brokered the formula that was agreed at a meeting of the groups at the eastern Afghan town of Jalalabad, the sources said. The participants to the Jalalabad meeting included hardline Mujahadeen leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami party, which has been fighting President Burhanuddin Rabbani's government for the past 13 days. There was no immediate word of response from Mr. Rabbani, whose Jamiat-e-Islami party was not represented at the meeting. The sources said the formula also envisaged the revival of a leadership council, representing nine main Mujahadeen parties, which Mr. Rabbani says no longer exists after the convening of a controversial assembly last month that elected him president for the next two years and created an interim parliament. "Now we have our own parliament and the president, and anyone who wants to solve the Afghan problem can go to the president or can do so through the parliament," Noorullah Emad, an envoy of Mr. Rabbani, said in Peshawar Saturday.



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Yemen sends envoy to Syria

DAMASCUS (R) — Yemen's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Abdul Aziz Al Dali arrived in Damascus Sunday and held talks with President Hafez Al Assad. The Syrian Arab News Agency quoted Mr. Dali as saying he had brought a message for Mr. Assad from Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh. He said that during his three-day visit he would hold talks with Syrian officials on Arab and international affairs and bilateral relations.

Kuwait seeks to end invasion probe row

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait, seeking to end a wrangle over a parliamentary probe into Iraq's 1990 invasion, has set up a committee to improve ties between parliament and government, a newspaper said Sunday. Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Jasssem Al Aoun told Al Watan newspaper the three-man committee would bring parliament and government closer on points of difference. The dispute centres on a parliamentary fact-finding committee probing all aspects of Iraq's invasion including the role of the Kuwaiti armed forces. Parliament, which has criticised many aspects of government policy since its election in October, is reviewing government performance and legislation since it last sat in 1986.

Bishari represents Libya at league

CAIRO (AP) — Libya's former Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al Bishari Sunday took office as his country's delegate to the Arab League, Mr. Bishari, who lost his ministerial position in a cabinet reshuffle in November, presented his credentials to the league's secretary-general, Esmat Abdul Meguid. He is replacing Ali Treiki. The new Libyan delegate said there are contacts between the 21-member league and a seven-member committee on Libya to help solve the country's crisis with the West. The committee, formed by the league last year, has made no progress so far. Libya has been under arms, air and diplomatic sanctions since April for its refusal to hand over two Libyans charged with blowing up Pan Am 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland in Dec. 1988. Libya denies the charge and has said it is willing to surrender the two to a country where they can be guaranteed a fair trial. It has said Washington and London do not meet this condition.

Lebanon, Syria hold military talks

DAMASCUS (AP) — Lebanon's army chief, General Emile Lahoud, arrived Sunday at the head of a high-ranking army delegation for talks to increase cooperation with Syrian forces. Gen. Lahoud was greeted at the Syrian-Lebanese border by Syria's chief of staff, Major General Hikmat Shihab. The group drove to the Defence Ministry in Damascus for talks. The Syrian Arab News Agency said discussions would focus on ways of developing cooperation between the two armies in various fields. Syria is the main power-broker in Lebanon, with some 40,000 troops deployed in northern and eastern areas as a peace-keeping force.

Sanaa kidnap bid foiled

SANAA (AP) — A Canadian man foiled the attempted kidnapping of an American woman in downtown Sanaa overnight, a corporate executive said Sunday. It was the latest incident of lawlessness here involving westerners. On Jan. 24, Yemeni tribesmen kidnapped German-born Canadian Mike Schmitz of Edmonton, Alberta, and are still holding him. He works with Sterling Air Services, a shipping company. A Sterling executive, who insisted on anonymity, said the latest incident occurred about midnight Saturday (2100 GMT) as the American woman and a Sterling employee were leaving a party at a private home near the Taj Sheraton Hotel in downtown Sanaa. He said that five Yemenis accosted the couple and tried to bundle the woman into a taxi. He said that Rob Barnett, a Canadian in his 20s, was able to fight them off.

Israel hints at 'goodwill' step to head off sanctions

Rabin interrupts cabinet meeting to meet U.S. envoy

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin interrupted a cabinet meeting Sunday to meet a U.S. envoy trying to avert U.N. sanctions against Israel over its expulsion of 415 Palestinians. After the meeting between Mr. Rabin and U.S. Ambassador William Harrop, Elyakim Rubenstein, cabinet secretary and a senior peace negotiator, hinted Israel was considering a goodwill gesture to head off sanctions. Asked about local press reports that Israel would allow one third of the Palestinians to return, Mr. Rubenstein told reporters: "I can't speak in terms of numbers." He said a military review of evictees' files launched after Israel's high court upheld the expulsions last week "may have some results."

Mr. Rabin's office would not discuss his 30-minute meeting with Mr. Harrop, but Health Minister Haim Ramon said later: "It was more linked to the U.N. than any other subject."

The U.N. Security Council has insisted Israeli take the evictees back at once from their tent camp between Israeli and Lebanese army lines in south Lebanon.

The new Clinton administration in Washington is anxious to defuse the crisis and to avoid alienating Arabs by vetoing sanctions. U.S. newspaper reports said Washington was pressing Mr. Rabin for a compromise.

Suggestions that have circulated include the return of some evictees and the shortening of others' terms of exile, now up to two years.

Government spokesman Uri Dromi said Saturday Mr. Rabin might show "flexibility," although he is a hawk on "security" and his prestige is at stake because he personally proposed expulsions.

"One possibility is that, as the U.N. debate nears, Rabin may favour returning a number of the men, perhaps 30, whose deportation would be commuted to administrative detention," said the reserve army colonel.

This would signal to the Security Council that Israel had created a mechanism to solve the problem on its own, he said.

Nineteen evictees have left their makeshift camp, either for medical treatment or because Israel had expelled them by mistake and allowed them to return.

Mr. Rabin's prestige suffered a blow Saturday when assailants killed two Israeli soldiers in the occupied Gaza Strip, setting off celebrations among the evictees in Lebanon (see separate story).

Israel's cabinet, which is mostly to the left of Mr. Rabin, has been stung by criticism of the expulsions and some ministers sound ready to review the issue.

Dovish Environment Minister Yossi Sarid said Saturday the men should be moved in Israel's self-declared South Lebanon "security zone" as a compromise.

Egypt said Sunday the Israeli high court ruling upholding the expulsion had further complicated the crisis and the Middle East peace talks.

"The Israeli high court decision added more complications to the issue of the Palestinian deportees and to the peace process," a Foreign Ministry statement said.

It said Foreign Minister Amr Musa, who was set to start an official tour of Africa, had decided to return directly to Egypt from a Switzerland visit to concentrate on the crisis.

"In view of the current developments and circumstances which require intensification of contacts with the parties concerned and with the United Nations, Foreign Minister Amr Musa decided to postpone his trip to African states which was due to start on Sunday," the statement added.

Mr. Musa decided to postpone his trip to Namibia, Zimbabwe and Kenya because the new developments require "intensified contacts with the concerned parties and at the United Nations level."

Mr. Musa flew to Israel earlier

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Bouez says U.S. sought more time over evictees

BEIRUT (Agencies) — The United States has asked Lebanon to give it time to solve the problem of nearly 400 Palestinians expelled by Israel, Lebanon's foreign minister said Sunday. Foreign Minister Faris Bouez said the Lebanese government and the Arab League had not fixed a date for a possible visit to Lebanon by Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid. "We told Secretary General Abdul Meguid: 'Let's wait a bit because the Americans asked us to give them a short breathing space for their efforts to solve the deportees issue,'" Mr. Bouez told Reuters. "There is no decision on the visit yet," he said. Dr. Abdul Meguid announced Saturday that he would travel to Lebanon to visit the Palestinians in the next few days. Washington wants to defuse the crisis before the United Nations Security Council meets to consider sanctions against Israel, to save it alienating Arabs by vetoing such a move.

U.S. Ambassador William Harrop met Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Sunday to discuss ways to avert sanctions. The Lebanese government has barred everyone but journalists from entering the evictees' makeshift camp through territory under its control. Officials said Dr. Abdul Meguid had asked Beirut if a visit to the camp would help.

The expellees, visibly buoyed by the killing of two Israeli soldiers, refused Sunday to accept any Israeli proposals that fell short of their demand to be allowed to return home.

They said they were heartened by the killing of two Israeli soldiers in the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip Saturday.

The 396 Palestinians celebrated for hours in their tent camp late Saturday after Israel announced the first fatal attack on troops in the occupied territories since their mass expulsion on Dec. 17.

They urged the United Nations to impose tough sanctions this week to force Israel to take them back as demanded by security Council Resolution 799 and dared Washington to veto the step.

"We will not back down one inch over our firm position. We will only accept the total implementation of resolution 799," Abdul Aziz al Rantisi, the group's leader told reporters.

Israel accuses 2 Americans of Arab origin of Hamas tie

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel said Sunday that two Arab-Americans detained in the occupied West Bank were suspected of distributing hundreds of thousands of dollars to try to rebuild the hard-line Hamas group in the occupied territories. Statements from the army and government said that Mohammad Salah, 39, and Mohammad Jarad, 36, both of Chicago, were believed to be high-ranking activists of Hamas in the United States and had links to the movement in England. The seizure of Mr. Salah and Mr. Jarad led to the arrests of 40 Hamas activists in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and more arrests are expected, the army statement said. It said Mr. Salah and Mr. Jarad were suspected of trying to renew the activities of Hamas in the occupied territories after it was weakened by the expulsion of some 400 alleged Muslim activists to Lebanon in mid-December. Families of the men in the United States have denied that they had links to Hamas. Mr. Jarad was born in the West Bank town of Ramallah and Mr. Salah in Jerusalem, but both have lived in the United States for about 20 years. Both were said to be visiting relatives. Their arrests were announced.

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2 groups claim Gaza ambush

Combined agency dispatches

THE FUNDAMENTALIST Hamas movement Sunday claimed responsibility for the shooting deaths of two Israeli soldiers in the occupied Gaza Strip.

Hamas said in a statement faxed to news agencies in Amman that the ambush Saturday was in retaliation for "the court decision of the terrorist Rabin and the Israeli high court ruling last Thursday that his expulsion of some 400 Palestinians in December was legal."

Israel expelled the men, all suspected supporters of Hamas and Islamic Jihad movements, on Dec. 17 in retaliation for the slayings of six Israeli troops (see separate story).

Sunday claim was the second by a fundamentalist Palestinian group.

On Saturday, Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine — Battalions of Al Aqsa claimed responsibility for the attack.

Neither of the claims could be independently verified.

Israel has blamed Hamas for the attack.

The Battalions of Al Aqsa said the attack was to avenge the death of Omar Khamis Yusef Al Goula "who was assassinated by the hands of Zionist treachery."

Goula, who commanded a military unit of the Islamic Jihad group, died on Jan. 27, becoming the 1,000th Arab killed by Israel in the five-year uprising, according to an unofficial Reuters count.

Military sources said troops shot him when he drew a pistol during a chase.

"One of our groups, the battalion of martyr Ahmad Omar Halas, carried out a heroic operation this morning (Saturday) against an Israeli military patrol in Khan Yunis to avenge the death of comrade Omar Goula," the group said in a statement faxed to Reuters.

"The group returned safely to its base after the attack which lasted for 10 minutes killing two Zionist soldiers and wounding three others," it added.

The group is one of five factions into which Palestinians say Islamic Jihad has splintered in recent years.

Ezzedin Al Qassam — the military wing of Hamas — said the ambush was in retaliation for

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Sharif Zeid urges deputies to be realistic on civil service hirings

Deputies to form panel to study appointments list

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Sunday urged deputies to take into consideration the country's social and economic realities in investigating alleged injustices in civil service appointments as the Lower House formed a committee to check a list of government appointments for unfairness in granting work opportunities to job seekers.

"Pressure that accompany (government) appointments by all sides is a fact known to all," Sharif Zeid told the House during a session held to "exchange views with the government" on alleged nepotism and favouritism in civil service appointments.

Informing the House of recent measures the government took to ensure fairness in public hiring, the prime minister called for joint national efforts to "treat obvious imbalances in the administrative apparatus."

Sharif Zeid made his statement to the House as deputies were debating how to approach a request submitted by 15 deputies earlier this month to discuss what some of them called "an unfairness that can intensify the social threat of unemployment."

The deputies had asked for a government list detailing all civil service appointments for the last three years in order to ensure "a serious and practical debate of the issue."

They said they made the request in light of the House's

Finance Committee's report that nepotism, favouritism and paralysis were widespread in government bureaucracy.

The government first cited procedural irregularities for refusing to provide the list which it later made available to the House. Deputies however did not receive copies of the list because its size, according to House Speaker Latif Arabiyat, made it impossible to photocopy and distribute.

After a heated debate during which deputies differed on how to tackle the issue, the House voted on a motion of Husni Shiyab to form a special committee to study the government list and provide the House with a report of its findings.

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Aziz: Iraq deserves more credit for compliance

Baghdad (Agencies) — Iraq said Sunday it expected the new U.S. administration to give it more credit for complying with United Nations resolutions.

But the top U.N. nuclear inspector in Iraq ended his latest mission saying that Baghdad still had a long way to go to prove it was committed to dismantling its weapons programmes.

Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz said in a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) interview: "The Bush administration deliberately obscured the degree of implementation (of U.N. resolutions) because it wanted to use that as a political tool to destabilise the government of Iraq."

Calling for a new chapter in relations with Washington, he said his government had shown far greater compliance with Gulf war ceasefire terms than former U.S. President George Bush had claimed.

"This question can be discussed bilaterally and within the Security Council in an objective professional manner. The new administration will realise... that a great deal of implementation has taken place already," he told interviewer David Frost.

The United States and its British and French allies renewed attack on Iraq in January on the grounds that it was flouting U.N. resolutions adopted after the Gulf war.

Baghdad, seeking to ease more than two years of U.N. trade sanctions, is keen to repair relations with Washington and show it is complying.

But the senior U.N. nuclear inspector in Iraq said the ban should not be lifted until Baghdad comes clean on which foreign firms supplied its nuclear weapons programme.

Maurizio Zifferero, head of a team that left for Bahrain Sunday, also said that without long-term monitoring, there was no way to ensure Iraq will not again seek to develop a nuclear weapon.

But he told reporters that preliminary analysis of water samples indicates there has been no prohibited nuclear activity in Iraq for the past two years.

Mr. Zifferero, deputy head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, said a complete list of the foreign companies that helped Iraq build its nuclear weapons programme was necessary to develop a full picture of the programme.

He said the Iraqis were aware that failure to provide such a list "is a stumbling block" to lifting sanctions. "We cannot concede to give them a declaration of compliance without our being fully satisfied on the procurement items," he said.

He added that "I can't see any way" of lifting or easing sanctions until such a list is seen any way of lifting or easing sanctions until

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Rafsanjani calls for 'goodwill' gesture from U.S.

TEHRAN (Agencies) — President Hashemi Rafsanjani said Sunday that Iran needs "some goodwill gestures" from the United States before it would consider resuming diplomatic ties.

He suggested that one such measure would be freeing billions of dollars in Iranian assets frozen in the United States for more than a decade.

In a wide-ranging news conference, Mr. Rafsanjani also called for the lifting of the embargo on weapons sales to the embattled Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina; reiterated Iran's support for a cutback in OPEC global oil production to bolster prices; and said the "death sentence" against author Salman Rushdie still stands.

Mr. Rafsanjani makes the remarks at a news conference marking the 1979 revolution that brought the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to power. It is generally commemorated in Iran with a 10-day celebration that culminates on Feb. 11.

It was his first news conference with foreign reporters in two years, but most of Rafsanjani's remarks seemed to underscore the Iranian's isolationist policy.

Mr. Rafsanjani was asked about the possible resumption of ties with the United States, severed after Iranian militants seized 52 hostages in the U.S. embassy in Tehran in November 1979 and held them for 444 days.

He accused the United States of "continued animosity" towards Iran and said restoration of diplomatic relations would require "some goodwill gestures from the Americans."

"They will have to show some

signal of goodwill in practice and not in theory," Mr. Rafsanjani added.

The issue of assets concerns Iran's \$11 billion claim for American military equipment ordered by the late Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi before the 1979 revolution. Washington froze the deliveries after the embassy hostage incident.

In November 1991, the United States agreed to compensate Iran for \$260 million for impounded weaponry, the first step in resolving the outstanding claim.

Mr. Rafsanjani accused Washington of a "double standard" in supporting Israel despite its failure to abide by the U.N. Security Council order to repatriate 400 Palestinians the Jewish state expelled last month.

The same applied elsewhere, he said, charging that the United States was quick to enforce U.N. sanctions against Iraq but that it was "indifferent" to Serbian attacks on Muslims and Bosnians in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"We are now seeing a catastrophe in Bosnia, and the United States trying to ignore it," Mr. Rafsanjani said. He called for the arms embargo to be lifted.

He said Iran still hoped that the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) could cut production to push world oil prices up to the target of \$20 per barrel.

"If OPEC states reduce their production, we will be able to reach that final target price," he said.

Mr. Rafsanjani also said that

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Israelis rocket house in South Lebanon

TYRE, Lebanon (AP) — Two Israeli helicopter gunships Sunday rocketed a vacant house in South Lebanon, apparently suspecting it was used as a guerrilla base, security sources said. They said there were no casualties in the 2 p.m. (1200 GMT) raid on the house, which sat in a ravine between the villages of Eracheet and Shagra, 25 kilometres southeast of the port city of Tyre. An Irish officer serving with the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon, whose contingent maintains bases in the area, said the Cobra gunships fired three rockets at the house, scoring direct hits. After the helicopters left, Israeli gunners fired five 155-millimetre Howitzer shells on the area. Two of the shells also hit the same house, according to the security sources. There was no immediate report from Israel on Sunday's attack. Sunday's raid came two days after Israeli helicopters strafed a mountainous area near the southern market town of Nabatiyeh after a clash between Israeli troops and guerrillas. Five Israeli soldiers and a Lebanese civilian were reported injured in the incident. On Jan. 23, Israeli helicopters had hit suspected Lebanese villages after roadside bomb killed an Israeli soldier and wounded two.

Bread prices go up

By P. V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Bread price goes up by 10 fils a kilogramme as of Monday in line with the government's long-term objective of gradually reducing and eliminating state subsidies.

A statement issued by the Ministry of Supply said one kilogramme of brown Arabic bread and its different variations would cost 85 fils with package at bakeries and 90 fils at grocery stores. Earlier prices were 75, 80 and 85 respectively.

Price of white Western-style unstuffed and unpackaged loaf bread/sandwich and hamburger bread was raised from 150 fils to 160 fils, the statement said.

The statement also said bakeries should remain open between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. and set certain minimum standards and quality guidelines for bread.

It also set the prices for flour. Regular flour will cost JD 54.50 per tonne while white "zero" grade flour will cost JD 72 per tonne. Fifty-kilogramme bags will be available at JD 3,860 per bag for regular flour and JD 2,730 per bag for white flour. Each kilogramme of white flour will cost 85 fils.

Bread prices were an area left untouched by most governments; the increases announced Sunday come after a hiatus of several years.

Economists estimated that the increase in bread prices coupled with a recent hike in the price of subsidised rice would save the treasury up to JD 9 million in 1993.

The 1993 budget allocates JD 36 million for subsidies, which cover wheat — including flour — rice, sugar and milk powder. The figure compares with JD 45 million spent on subsidies in 1992.

The hike in bread and rice prices — by 20 fils a kilogramme — comes as the first measure this year in implementation of the government's policy of reducing subsidies in line with an economic restructuring programme agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1991.

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A Jerusalem protester Saturday night holds placards demanding the return home of the about 400 Palestinians expelled on Dec. 17. More than 2,000 Arabs and Israelis took part in the demonstration (AFP photo)

U.S. works to set up Somalia police force — American envoy

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. forces are working to organise a Somali police force in Mogadishu in the next few days to allow U.S. Marines to stay out of areas of the city where they are in danger of attack, U.S. envoy Robert Oakley says.

In an interview in the Washington Post, Mr. Oakley said the Mogadishu police force will be made up of former police officers and some former army generals and colonels.

"We can't afford to wait. We have people out in the street getting shot," Mr. Oakley told the newspaper.

One U.S. Marine was shot and killed in Mogadishu Monday night and another was killed last month while on patrol.

The United Nations was to set up the Somali national police, but Mr. Oakley said the United States decided to go ahead and do it because of the threat bandits posed to U.S. forces.

With the absence of local security forces and the collapse of the Somali warlords' militias, many young men who still are heavily armed have been drawn into banditry.

"The armies have disintegrated. They can't loot (relief supplies). They don't have any reason to do it, which is why we use them," Mr. Oakley said.

"We got sucked more deeply into the city — which is why we need a police force, so we can pull out," he said.

U.S. Marines arrived in Somalia on Dec. 9, assigned to secure routes for distribution of food to famine victims. The establishment of a Somali police force was to be handled by the United Nations when the U.S. work was completed.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said Wednesday it could take up to six months for the United Nations forces to assume command from U.S. forces.

U.N. sources said Secretary of State Warren Christopher planned to visit the United Nations Monday to discuss the withdrawal

of American forces from Somalia and consider a U.N. request that American logistics units stay behind under U.N. command.

Mr. Oakley said a small U.S. force could be left behind to prevent warlords from moving heavy weapons back to Mogadishu.

A U.S. raid on a "hotbed of banditry" turned up only one old rifle, but a joint U.S.-Botswana raid on a weapons bazaar was more successful.

About 700 members of the U.S. army's 10th Mountain Division descended on Afgoi, a ramshackle town of 40,000 people, an hour before sunset Saturday in a squadron of helicopters.

They tried to flush bandits and weapons from the dark streets and alleys. But in the first four hours of searching they found only one weapon: A World War II-vintage rifle.

Major Marty Culp, a spokesman for the U.S.-led military coalition, said the sparse results of the early hours of the operation were not an indication of failure.

"We wanted to send a strong message, and we have," he said, adding that the mission would continue for at least two days.

U.S. Marines and soldiers from Botswana had better luck in their joint sweep through the sprawling Bakara bazaar in Mogadishu.

According to a preliminary count, the troops confiscated 80 rifles, 15 pistols, two machineguns, two rocket-propelled grenades and two mortar tubes, said Marine Chief Warrant Officer Eric Carlson, a military spokesman. Other seized weapons had not been counted yet, he said.

In the second raid on the market in less than three weeks, nearly 500 Marines and 150 Botswanans moved into the market after 70 U.S. army military policemen sealed the area, Officer Carlson said.

The raid on Afgoi, about 70 kilometres west of Mogadishu, was one of the largest operations staged by U.S. troops since they first landed in Somalia on Dec. 9.

Major General Steven Arnold, the division commander, had described Afgoi as "a hotbed of banditry. They've been very active here, very bold."

The units moved on foot in squads of 12 and in armoured personnel carriers through the town as helicopter gunships swooped overhead.

Four shots were fired as two companies of soldiers moved slowly down the narrow dirt roads and paths of a residential area on the city's outskirts. The Americans dropped into firing positions and hugged the walls of the mud huts and buildings. No one was hit.

Other soldiers, led to a building by an informant who said it had once contained arms, roused about 20 men and a few women who had been inside.

As the men sat in a circle on the ground with their hands in the air, the troops called for anyone else inside the building to come out. When no one else did, they stormed inside.

Outside, Yusuf Muman, 36, one of the captives, explained the group had merely gotten together to chew khat, a mildly narcotic plant that takes the place of liquor in Somalia.

"It's a good idea, the soldiers looking for guns," said Mr. Muman, once an employee of now defunct Somalia Air Lines. "We have no problem with that. But we've been terrorised a bit. All we were doing was having a little social gathering."

The soldiers, having found nothing in the house, left without apology and the Khat Party continued.

Hours before the sweep began, army units quietly sealed off the major roads leading into and out of the town.

One of those roads leads from Mogadishu to Baidoa, a major food distribution point in south-central Somalia, the epicentre of the famine belt.

Gen. Culp said clan members had been operating in the area, "setting up roadblocks, conducting ambushes and extorting merchants."



Al Mustansiriyah University in Baghdad (photo by James Whittington)

Sanctions hit hard on higher education in Iraq

By James Whittington

THE UNITED NATIONS trade embargo on Iraq has been in place now for over two years, strangling the country's higher education and research, according to students and academics in Baghdad.

Resolution 661, which was passed on Aug. 6, 1990, four days after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, calls on all states to stop exporting commodities to Iraq with the exception of humanitarian aid and foodstuffs.

Since then, the country's nine public universities have been unable to receive current periodicals, books, research articles, and other essential sources. Furthermore, students and academic staff complain that even basic necessities such as pens and papers are almost impossible to get hold of.

Abdul Wahab Al Wakil, a graduate from Manchester University and now head of the English department at Al Mustansiriyah University in Baghdad, explained: "Intellectually it is very difficult. Both staff and students feel cut off from the world of learning. We can't get hold of current magazines, articles, and research materials. We are simply rereading our old books."

Post-graduate research in particular is suffering. Dr. Mohammad Jawad, a lecturer in occupational medicine, explained that his post-graduates were unable to find references dated after 1990 because of the embargo.

Library orders have been frozen and journals and periodicals to which the universities subscribed and have paid for are simply not delivered anymore. He added that whereas his lectures were normally updated every year, the difficulty in obtaining sources has meant that he is giving basically the same lecture as he was before the war.

"Research is basically impossible because our students are cut off from what is happening in the world of medicine. All our subscriptions to periodicals have been cancelled, and we rely on friends who travel abroad to bring back magazines and books," Dr. Jawad said.

One of the few links with the outside world is neighbouring Jordan. Iraqi universities have maintained close ties with their counterparts in Jordan. Last

month (December) the University of Jordan and Saddam University for Islamic Studies signed an agreement to enable the exchange of students and academics for seminars, conferences and joint research and supervision for post-graduates. Travel further afield is more difficult. Because the Iraqi dinar is so weak against foreign currencies the expense required to attend a conference outside the region is simply beyond most universities' means.

Not only are basic necessities for higher education unavailable in Iraq, but with the collapse of the domestic economy and prices inflated many hundredfold in some cases, students and universities are unable to afford what is on sale. A pencil, for example, which in 1989 cost only 200 fils now costs two Iraqi dinars at the official exchange rate.

Everything has been affected by the embargo. Whether it's finding pens, pencils, or paper to use in class, or obtaining current sources," said an English translation student from Al Mustansiriyah University.

Many students say that they are forced to find employment in addition to their studies to help support their families. Mohammad Omar, an undergraduate at the University of Baghdad, which is the largest university in Iraq with approximately 50,000 students, said he works night shifts as a waiter in a hotel. He earns 25 Iraqi dinars a day which would purchase two kilos of rice or half a kilo of fish at current prices.

Despite the sanctions, however, academics maintain that standards have been kept high in the country's universities. Dr. H. Salih, dean of Baghdad University's Management and Economics College, said that students were expected to produce work of the same quality as before the embargo. "Whoever writes a doctorate thesis has to contribute to knowledge and since they need up-to-date information to do this, we expect people to find the articles despite the economic embargo," he said.

Although most students and academics feel bitter towards the West because of the continuing enforcement of the sanctions, Fahed Al Shagra, the president of the National

Union of Iraqi Students (NUIS), pointed out that he thought was one of the few positive results of the economic embargo.

"Some fields, such as civil engineering, mechanical and electronic engineering have benefited," he said. "Students and departments have been forced to build their own instruments or repair old ones for their work, and some have designed their own."

He explained that by repairing an old electrical sensor for his doctorate research in geophysics, instead of ordering a new one, he gained a useful insight into how the instrument worked. "General self-sufficiency will be an asset to Iraq in the long run," he predicted.

Without access to spare parts, however, self-sufficiency is limited, and many post-graduates are restricted in choosing areas of research because of the lack of current information. One of the few Iraqis who was recently accepted by an American University to take a PhD in civil engineering, said in Jordan before his departure: "Although in Iraq I can gain practical experience through the country's reconstruction programme, it would be impossible for me to gain the necessary academic grounding there."

On top of the difficulties in higher education, students and academics are suffering psychologically, like the rest of the population, from the continuing tension between the Western allies and the Iraqi regime. They are tired of the conflict and the recent ceasefire announcement from Saddam Hussein was met with popular support by most Iraqis. Despite the continuing standoff between America and Iraq, many students are cautiously optimistic that Bill Clinton will adopt a less aggressive policy towards them.

Dr. Abd al-Hadi Yousef Al Khassab, president of the University of Baghdad, said: "We can only hope that Clinton is different because we want to return to the rest of the academic world. When you are cut off from the rest of the world it is painful you know. We function but it is a big battle for us."

The writer has just concluded a two-week visit to Iraq.

Egypt runs news blackout on militants — diplomats

CAIRO (R) — Diplomats accuse the Egyptian government of operating a news blackout on Muslim militant actions against foreign tourists in order to maintain the country's image abroad.

Authorities angrily denied the charge, saying: "When something happens we say so."

The diplomats said at least three incidents involving foreigners this month have been denied by officials or not reported in the state-controlled media.

"They cannot block everything, they know that," said one Western diplomat.

"If an incident slips out before they can stop it then they will not hide it any more because it makes no sense."

Interior Minister spokesman Police General Galal Al Shami asked if a blackout was being followed, told Reuters: "It is completely untrue."

"We are frank. When something happens we say so," he said.

The diplomats said nobody was known to be hurt in the attacks and they appeared to have little planning. But they signalled that the militants aimed to ruin Egypt's image abroad and scare off tourists.

The government has given wide coverage to recent attacks on security forces in a bid to win public support against the militants.

But it has tried to hush up the incidents involving foreigners, the diplomats said.

On Jan. 5, local security

sources in Upper Egypt said shots were fired at a bus carrying Japanese tourists in a known militant stronghold.

A senior official later told a news conference there had been no attack, saying police travelling with the tourists had fired shots in the air protectively.

Senior security sources confirmed press reports that a group of 20 militants were arrested about two weeks ago in the middle of preparations to attack foreign embassies. Diplomats from countries believed targeted said authorities told them the reports were based on rumour.

A diplomatic source said a group of Turkey-based diplomats on holiday in Egypt were attacked on a tourist bus near the Pyramids Wednesday. It was not clear if the attackers knew their identity or not. An official spokesman said he had no knowledge of the incident.

Police admitted a Jan. 8 attack on a tourist bus near the Pyramids after reporters arrived on the scene while they were still carrying out investigations.

Telephone callers who say they speak for the Islamic Group, the most active group fighting the government, have said they carried out other attacks in the past two months but there has been no independent confirmation of these incidents.

The group issued a statement earlier this month warning foreign tourists to stay out of Cairo so as not to get caught up in their struggle with the government.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Suspects held in attack on Jewish businessman

ANKARA (AP) — Police arrested two Turks accused of shooting at a Jewish businessman in one of two recent attacks linked to illegal Islamic groups, news reports said Saturday. Interior Minister Ismet Sezgin announced the arrest of two of four men suspected of firing at Jak Kahmi as he was driving to work Thursday in Istanbul. Mr. Kahmi's bodyguards returned fire, the gunmen escaped and the businessman escaped injury. Mr. Sezgin said the two suspects were arrested in the province of Van bordering Iran and confessed to taking part in the attack, state television reported. Mr. Sezgin said the two men were travelling to Nakhichevan, a mostly Azerbaijani autonomous region in the former Soviet Union. Mr. Sezgin said their passports showed that they had also travelled to Iran a number of times from Armenia, the Turkish news agency Anatolia reported. Mr. Kahmi, 67, heads the Profilo holding conglomerate and is chairman of a foundation commemorating the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Jews in Turkey from Spain. A left-wing journalist and outspoken critic of Islamic fundamentalism was murdered a few days before the shooting. Three different Islamic underground groups, including the Islamic Jihad, claimed responsibility for Ugur Mumcu's assassination. Police have detained 11 foreign nationals from Iran, Iraq, Syria and Libya in connection with the killing.

Pollisario: U.N. plan still best for Sahara

ALGIERS (R) — Polisario front spokesman Mohammed Sidati urged the United Nations Saturday to pursue its efforts to get agreement on a peace plan for Western Sahara. Speaking on Algiers Radio, the front's information minister said the best option "is the most adequate, logical and just, remains that of continuing efforts to get the two parties to come to the table and accept the plan adopted by the United Nations." Mr. Sidati arrived in Algiers Friday shortly after U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali sent a report to the Security Council on the dispute between the front, which wants independence, and Morocco, which claims the territory. The two sides have been in conflict for over 16 years. A ceasefire in September 1991 was due to be followed last January by a referendum to give Saharans the choice between independence and integration with Morocco. But the vote has been indefinitely delayed by a dispute on who is eligible to take part. The report said Dr. Ghali was considering having the U.N. impose its own terms for holding a referendum in the area as negotiations with Morocco and Saharan leaders had brought no result. Mr. Sidati said: "For us, the peace plan remains the cornerstone for a definitive and just solution to the conflict in the Western Sahara."

20 dead, 15 injured in Cairo collapse

CAIRO (AP) — The casualty toll from a collapsed six-storey apartment house in the Cairo suburb of Helwan has risen to 20 dead and 15 injured, according to the state-run Middle East News Agency. It said two bodies were recovered Saturday morning and four others in the evening. Dr. Samir Sultan, director of Helwan hospital, said two bodies were brought in Saturday morning, 1½ days after the condemned building collapsed but was not immediately available to confirm the number of those brought in the evening. Of the injured, he said, nine were discharged Friday and six remained hospitalised in good condition. Police said rescue operations continued at the site of the building, which came down Thursday afternoon. A spokesman said a few tenants remained unaccounted for and could be buried under the debris. The building was ordered evacuated two years ago with instructions to the landlord to repair it.

Troops kill four Muslim militants in Algeria

ALGIERS (R) — Troops and gendarmes shot dead four Muslim fundamentalists and wounded three in Algeria at the weekend, with one gun battle blazing round the home of a mosque preacher.

Para-military gendarmes headquarters, quoted by Algiers Radio Sunday, said security forces acting on a tip surrounded 10 Islamic militants in Helwan, Bouira province, 90 kilometres southeast of the capital.

"Two terrorists were killed and three wounded during a clash... five of the group fled after taking their companions' weapons," the gendarmes said.

In another combined operation, troops and gendarmes killed two fundamentalists in mountains near Khemis Al Khechna, 30

kilometres southeast of Algiers.

"These two were part of a group of five terrorists trying to steal hunting rifles and other items from citizens," the authorities said. Ten hunting rifles were recovered along with a big haul of ammunition.

The authorities have given Algerians in seven regions until Feb. 10 to hand in such guns for what they term safekeeping or face legal action.

Fundamentalists, blamed for killing more than 20 members of the security forces last year and 12 this month, are termed "terrorists" in Algerian official parlance.

The latest deaths bring to 30 the number of militants killed this year.

Sanbar to monitor Eritrea referendum

AMMAN (J.T.) — The U.N. secretary-general has announced the appointment of Lebanese Samir Sanbar, director of Information Centres Division of the Department of Public Information (DPI), as his special representative for the United Nations mission to verify the referendum in Eritrea (UNOVER). The appointment is at the assistant secretary-general level. The referendum process in Eritrea, begun in July 1992, phases, namely, the registration of voters, the referendum campaign and the poll.

The mandate of UNOVER is to verify the impartiality of the referendum authorities and organs; complete freedom of organisation, movement, assembly and expression; and equal access to media facilities and the proper drawing up of the roles.

The mission will also report to the referendum authorities on complaints, irregularities and interferences, and observe all activities related to the referendum, including registration of voters, organisation of the poll, the campaign, the counting, computation and announcement of results — ESCWA press release

Carey to press for return of expellees

CAPE TOWN (AP) — Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey said Saturday the Anglican Church would urge the United Nations to force Israel to allow hundreds of Palestinian expellees to return home.

The issue of the more than 400 Palestinians was one of several debated by Anglican bishops, clergy and laity during a two-week meeting at the University of the Western Cape outside Cape Town.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Archbishop Carey told reporters the delegates had urged the enforcement "with vigor" of the United Nations Security Council resolution calling for the Palestinians to be permitted to return to their homes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"Our concern was humanitarian, our concern was moral. We thought it was actually morally wrong, the way that those poor people are being treated," said Archbishop Carey, leader of the world's 70 million Anglicans.

The Palestinians were expelled Dec. 17 for alleged connections to hardline Muslim groups and have been stranded since then in a tent camp in southern Lebanon.

Archbishop Carey met both President F.W. de Klerk and African National Congress (ANC) President Nelson Mandela during his visit.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 Pait Dejeuner Complet
19:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine Sportif
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Step by Step
21:10 Sherlock Holmes
22:00 News in English
22:30 Jordan Times
23:00 Vietnam

PRAYER TIMES

05:06 Fajr
06:20 Sunrise/Duha
14:07 Dhuhur
17:12 Maghrib
18:32 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 637785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
Dr. de Salla Church Tel. 661757
Terra Nova Church Tel. 623346
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be cold, cloudy and rainy, with snow falling on heights with an elevation of more than 1,000 metres above sea level. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy and there will be a chance for scattered showers of rain, while winds will be southerly fresh and seas rough.

Amman Min./Max. temp. 2/6
Aqaba 3/14
Djordan Valley 6/12

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 12, Aqaba 18 Humidity readings: Amman 52 per cent, Aqaba 45 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mohammad A. Ajam 894184
Dr. Mohammad Iman 612232
Dr. Fakhr Abu Tayeh 863880
Dr. Mohammad Manaa 741444
Firas pharmacy 661912
Firdous pharmacy 776336
Al Azma pharmacy 637055
Neiroukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Simons pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

IBRID:
Dr. Maan Bargawi (-)
Alkuds pharmacy (-)

ZARQA:
Dr. Fawaz Hamdallah 903644

Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 627111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 109
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 834862
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81361/332
Khalil Maternity, J. Amn. 64281/6
Alkhal Maternity, J. Amn. 64241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642652
Mallat, J. Amman 636140
Pakadine, Shmouani 664171/4
Shmouani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mushar Hospital 6672779
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/57
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajroo 77101/3

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

(Terminal 1)
07:15 Sanaa (RJ)
08:00 Jeddah (RJ)
08:15 Cairo, Aqaba (RJ)
08:25 Riyadh (RJ)
08:30 Damascus (RJ)
08:45 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
08:50 New Delhi (RJ)
08:55 Beirut (RJ)
09:00 Cairo (RJ)
09:10 Bangkok (RJ)
09:15 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
09:20 London (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:15 Beirut (ME)
06:25 Cairo (ME)
06:30 Aden (AL)
06:45 Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)
07:05 Istanbul (TK)
07:10 Kuwait (KU)
07:20 Dubai (EM)

MARKET PRICES

Up/down prices in fils per kg.
Apples 700/700
Bananas 640/640
Beans (Mekamur) 640/640
Beans (small) 690/640
Cabbage 160/160
Carrot 160/160
Cauliflower 210/160
Cucumbers (large) 150/160
Cucumbers (small) 300/220
Eggplant 320/220
Garlic 650/220
Grapefruit 180/120
Lemon 270/200
Marrow (large) 200/100
Marrow (small) 440/120
Mint 80
Onion (dry) 210/180
Onion (green) 240/180
Orange 600/160
Pepper (hot) 380/280
Pepper (sweet) 180/120
Potato 230/200
Tomato 130/60
Spinach 240/180



Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker meets with representatives of the Jordan-Canada Business Council Sunday (Petra photo)

Sharif Zeid meets Jordan-Canada Business Council

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Sunday expressed the government's eagerness to support the Jordanian private sector and the efforts of the newly-formed Jordan-Canada Business Council (JCBC).

Speaking at a meeting in his office with members of the council, inaugurated Saturday at the Amman Plaza Hotel, the Prime Minister said the Jordanian government would facilitate the council's work so that "available opportunities can be utilised in order to achieve further progress in the country and maximise interaction between Canada and Jordan in the interests of the two nations."

The Prime Minister was briefed on the council's "plans and programmes to stimulate trade, economic and industrial relations between Canada and Jordan in an effort to give momentum to the Jordanian economy which has witnessed constant and progressive development," said a statement following the meeting.

The statement said the council will exert efforts towards increasing the volume of trade between Canada and the Arab world

through Jordan. Amman Chamber of Industry President Mamdouh Abu Hassan, in an address at the opening session of the council's meeting, said "within a radius of 600 miles from the Jordanian port of Aqaba, trucks can cover by land the capitals of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates with a total population exceeding 100 million."

Canada's ambassador to Jordan Andrew Robinson said in the meeting Saturday that his country attached importance to the World Bank's structural adjustment programme and the strengthening of Jordan's natural resources management.

"As part of our programme we will be providing policy and structural adjustment support, particularly in the planning and implementation of policy reforms in natural resources management," the ambassador said.

Attending the meeting at the Prime Minister's office were Minister of Water and Irrigation Samir Kassar, the acting Minister of Industry and Trade, and Ambassador Robinson.

Landslide victory in Salt elections

AMMAN (J.T.) — Assistant Balqa Governor Mohammad Al Faour late Saturday announced the results of the Salt municipal council elections.

Twenty-three candidates belong to two blocs, the Reconstruction bloc and the Justice for All bloc, and an independent candidate ran for the 11-member council.

The Reconstruction bloc secured a landslide victory winning nine seats.

The Justice for All bloc took two seats. The highest number of votes went to Wisah Al Wisah with 2,918 votes, followed by Subhi Al Babbouh with 2,879, Tayseer Al Hadeidi with 2,665, Nayef Al Awamleh with 2,637, Fares Arabiyat with 2,603, Ahmad Khreisat with 2,492, Hashem Al Hiyari with 2,366, Youssef Barbour with 2,052 and Salem Ghneimat with 2,025 votes.

Out of 15,147 eligible voters 8,958 cast their ballots in Saturday's election.



Two-week-old baby pulls through surgery to remove cancerous tumour, at Al Bashir Hospital Sunday (Petra photo)

Doctors remove tumour from two-week-old

AMMAN (Petra) — Doctors at Al Bashir Hospital Sunday performed successful surgery on a two-week-old baby, born with a liver tumour.

Dr. Abdul Hadi Breizat, who performed the surgery with a medical team, said he removed the left part of the baby's liver, which was affected by the cancerous tumour.

Dr. Breizat said the surgery was the first of its kind in Jordan, adding that this was a rare case. He said liver cancer accounts for 2 to 3 per cent of children's cancers. It affects children during

the first four years of their lives, but half of these cases occur during the first 18 months of a child's life.

Dr. Breizat said it is extremely difficult to diagnose the cause of such tumours, adding that total recovery can only be ensured by total removal of the tumour and further treatment with radiotherapy.

Dr. Breizat said the surgery took four hours and the baby developed no complications. He said the baby will leave the hospital after two days.

Parties' compliance aids legalisation

BEIRUT (J.T.) — The legalising of some political parties in Jordan last month, after their applications had first been rejected, was not a change of heart on the part of the Ministry of Interior, but rather a response to the recommendations of an ad-hoc committee charged with examining such cases, according to Interior Minister Jawdat Al Shoul.

The ministry had demanded that these parties introduce amendments to the parties' names and programmes, and conform to the political parties regulations.

In a statement to the Beirut-based magazine Al Usbu Al Arabi, the minister said that in a dialogue with the ministry, these political groups agreed to the amendments.

Mr. Shoul said the Baath Party for instance was one of the groups which had applied to create the Arab Baath Socialist Party. After introducing the required amendment, its name became the Jordanian Baath Socialist Party, Mr. Shoul added.

We sought to present this political group as a political party with a national identity in form and content, and this does not conflict with the Kingdom's national message, the minister said.

Asked to comment on Arab interior ministers' decisions taken in Tunis on Jan. 5, which were interpreted as calling for a crackdown on Muslim fundamentalism, Mr. Shoul said Jordan adopted a well-known stand representing the country's pan-Arab orientation.



Jawdat Al Shoul

Jordan's position is an extension of and similar to those of other Arab countries as it adheres to objectivity and refuses all forms of fanaticism and seeks wise moderate policies, the minister said.

Not a single meeting in Tunis was held in secret, the minister added.

Ministry to announce water network tenders

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Ministry of Water and Irrigation's Water Authority will announce a tender this week for the water network in the northern city of Ramtha in the Irbid governorate, according to Ministry Secretary General Mutazz Al Bilbeisi.

Mr. Bilbeisi said in a statement to the Jordan Times that the project entails operating the newly-laid network and replacing the old part of the network which is leaking and worn out.

The project also involves linking homes with the main network, the secretary general added.

Declining to give any figures,

Mr. Bilbeisi said the major cost of the project, which will be implemented within the first quarter of 1993, will be covered by the government.

The secretary general said that several tenders are also being processed to replace the old water network in Amman. Tender documents have been prepared for various parts of the project, and one tender has already been awarded to a local firm, he said.

The total cost of replacing Amman's water network, which will be implemented in three stages, is JD 25 million, Mr. Bilbeisi said.

He said in the coming week, a team of German specialists will arrive in Amman to discuss the implementation of the initial phase of the plan, which will be partly financed through a Ger-

man loan.

Minister of Water and Irrigation Samir Kassar was quoted in the local press in early January as saying the districts of Jabal Al Naser, Marka and Hashemi, will be among the first areas where work is to begin.

Nearly JD 50 million will be spent on the replacement of water networks in Jordan's cities including Irbid Salt, Mafrqa, and North Shuneh as well as Ramtha and Amman, the minister said.

Mr. Kassar said a JD 10 million tender has already been awarded to local firms for the Irbid project, which is being partially financed through a loan from the European Investment Bank.

The present networks cover 97 per cent of the Kingdom's four million people.

Arabs must be pragmatic, says Hisham Sharabi

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A more pragmatic view of U.S. policy towards the Middle East is necessary to enhance the Arab-Israeli peace talks, according to Hisham Sharabi, professor of history at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

"The U.S. is a key player whether we liked it or not," Dr. Sharabi said during a lecture at the University of Jordan Saturday. "It is of vital importance to any solution in the region, regardless of our evaluation of its style (of action)," he added.

While a pro-Israeli stand was part of U.S. President Bill Clinton's platform during the presidential race, Dr. Sharabi believes that there might now be a relative change from the previous U.S. administration's "hostile stand" towards the Middle East that is bound to be dictated by current events in the international arena.

He said that most of those appointed by President Clinton are not of "traditional Zionist affiliations as many may think in the Arab milieu; most of them are moderate, and one of them is an advocate of the Israeli Peace Now movement," he said.

One participant to the lecture criticised the Arab way of thinking that a change of U.S. presidents means a change in policy which he says does not necessarily apply to the Middle East as it does to other countries such as Vietnam and Panama.

"We should not pay any atten-

tion to any change in presidency since it will not affect us (the Arabs) as it affects the events in other regions... we have to realise that the danger in front of the Arab World is Israel, planted in the middle of our societies and threatening our existence," the participant said.

Dr. Sharabi answered that this was common knowledge among concerned parties; nevertheless, the Madrid Middle East peace conference was destined to take place because there was an interest to all parties in a political settlement.

"The solution that the negotiations entail is now backed up by leading American personalities as well as by Israeli public opinion," he said.

"We must not sit back and say that Israel is America's friend; we have to embark on a strategic plan of action based on a clear vision of the future so as to achieve our goals with minimum losses," Dr. Sharabi asserted.

While one participant was protested that this is a desperate solution to opt for, Dr. Sharabi said that participating in the current peace talks in Washington is one choice to accept or not, but looking back in history, it seems it is the only card left to play for the Arabs.

"All means, during Arab history, were exhausted but to no avail... armed struggle, political action and diplomacy have failed," Dr. Sharabi said.

If peace talks are to continue and bear fruit, there ought to be strong coordination on three levels, according to Dr. Sharabi.

On the international level, European countries must have a more active role in the peace talks as "this would be a significant and vital contribution to the advancement of the Palestinian action and position in the peace talks," he said.

On the Arab level, Dr. Sharabi said differences among Arab countries should be swept aside and more concentration should be spearheaded towards the adoption of a unified stand in the peace talks.

"We should not sit and wait until differences are settled and until Arab unity is established," he said. "Diplomatic and political action have to be envisaged within the possible resources in our hands, regardless of our personal differences."

On the Palestinian level, an understanding between the national and Islamic forces has to be reached, otherwise "the enemy will make use of the rising differences and invest them for its own advantage," Dr. Sharabi stressed.

While some participants voiced doubt over any positive change in the region, Dr. Sharabi said pessimism must not reign and unified efforts must be exerted towards the betterment of our societies.

"Not Israel, nor the West, nor America will ruin us," he said. "We exist and we will continue to exist; but it is for us to decide if this fight will be for an advanced society or for a humiliated one," he said. "We have not given in and we will not, but we are passing through some difficult stages at present."

Investors find attractive incentives

AMMAN (Petra) — In 1992, economic investments in Jordan, which totalled JD 146.7 million, exceeded those of the previous three years combined, according to a statement Sunday by Jamil Qammuah, Director of the Ministry of Industry and Trade Department For Encouraging Investments.

Mr. Qammuah said 79 major firms invested in large projects in Jordan last year, in comparison to 33 in 1991.

The increase in investment resulted in 6,215 new jobs; nearly three times as many as in 1991, Mr. Qammuah added.

He said there were investments in industry, agriculture, livestock farms, fisheries, tourism, health (hospitals), maritime transport and vocational training.

Mr. Qammuah attributed the rush for investment in Jordan to the conviction on the part of investors of the viability of Jordan's investment climate.

He said the government facilities offered to investors and new regulations which cut down on much of the red tape were also responsible for this upswing. Mr. Qammuah said the volume of investments, also contributed to the success of the economic restructuring programme as agreed to with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Convicted killer of minor executed at Swaga jail

AMMAN (J.T.) — A man convicted of murdering a minor was hanged Saturday at Swaga Reform and Rehabilitation Centre. The prisoner was sentenced to death by the Higher Criminal Court after he confessed to committing the murder on Aug. 10, 1991.

The 28-year-old convict, identified only as J.M.A., stabbed his 16-year-old victim in the neck, identified by his initials as Y.S.S., with a broken beer bottle, penet-

rating his vocal cords and veins.

The murderer, and an alleged accomplice, dropped the fatally injured victim in a water sewerage tunnel where a passerby discovered the minor and transported him to Aqaba Hospital. Ten minutes later the victim died.

The Aqaba Police Force began a wide search operation which led to discovering the murderer's identity and apprehending him.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Hassan visits Army Headquarters

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday visited the Armed Forces Headquarters where he was received by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Fathi Abu Taleb, the Chief of Staff of the land forces, and a number of assistants. Prince Hassan met for a while with Field Marshal Abu Taleb and discussed with him issues of common interest to the Armed Forces. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Royal Court Chief Khalid Al Karaki. The briefing was attended by the acting Minister of Finance and directors of the General Intelligence and Public Security Departments, as well as senior Armed Forces officers.

Land use symposium calls for new law

AMMAN (Petra) — Participants in a two-day symposium on the land use Sunday called for enacting a new regional planning law saying that such a law will provide a legislative umbrella linking national plans with city and village organisations. At the end of its sessions, the participants to the symposium recommended that the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment make the necessary amendments to the law on organisation of cities and villages, which dates back to 1966, pending the issuance of a new law. Participants also called for reconsidering the regional development plans in an effort to ensure that such plans are in line with the comprehensive national planning process. The symposium stressed the need for preparing plans on the land use in the various provinces and regions, benefitting from specialised maps prepared by the ministries and institutions concerned. Participants also called for establishing a data-bank to provide information on land use to planners and decision-makers.

PSD announces arrival of pilgrims

AMMAN (Petra) — Palestinians living in Arab territories occupied since 1948 will arrive in Jordan Wednesday en route to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, where they will be performing Umra (minor pilgrimage), according to Public Security Department (PSD) sources. The PSD called on Jordanian citizens wishing to host any of the Palestinian pilgrims to call at the PSD station in Ghor Nimreen, near the King Hussein Bridge, to finalise the necessary procedures, before they can put up any of the guests. The PSD called on citizens to produce either a passport or a family registration book, which will be kept with the PSD, together with the guest's permit.

Poets invited to Baghdad festival

BAGHDAD (Petra) — Several Jordanian poets will take part in Iraq's celebrations of the second anniversary of "the mother of all battles." The higher committee of the Mother of All Battles festival has extended invitations to Jordanian poets to participate in a poetry festival which will be held in Baghdad Feb. 9-13. Poets from around the Arab World are expected to take part in the festival. Iraq's celebrations of the second anniversary of the Gulf war started Jan. 17 and included the inauguration of several development projects and several cultural events.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ☆ Exhibition entitled "Modernist Still Life Photographed" at the American Centre.
- ☆ Medical book exhibition at Al Bashir Hospital.
- ☆ Exhibition of watercolour paintings by Syrian artist Nazir Nab'a at Bakadia Art Gallery — opening ceremony at 6 p.m.
- ☆ Plastic art exhibition by Abed Bani Yassin and Nawwaf Mandeel at Deir Abee Saeed Girls' Secondary School.

ITALIAN FILM WEEK

- ☆ English-subtitled Italian film entitled "Diamante" at the Royal Culture Centre at 8 p.m.

Aziz: Iraq deserves more credit

(Continued from page 1)

such a list is provided.

For months Iraq has refused to provide it, saying it was a matter of protecting confidential, sovereign trade. But recently Iraq agreed to supply answers to specific questions from the inspection team.

Iraq says the United Nations already knows about 90 per cent of the names, about 80 companies, and now is willing to discuss the remaining 10 per cent.

Mr. Zifferero said the past week's inspection was routine and no new sites were visited. He said officials still were working on a long-term monitoring plan which he phased in.

He again complained that Iraq still has not formally accepted two U.N. resolutions on long-term monitoring to ensure that it never again seeks to develop weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Zifferero said he would know whether Baghdad was prepared to answer questions submitted by U.N. on suppliers when the inspection team returned to Iraq within the next few weeks.

In what could foreshadow further problems, he said the most controversial inspections were probably yet to come.

Mr. Aziz, speaking in the BBC television interview, said his country had no intentions of launching any fresh attack on Kuwait, but would not say whether Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein had renounced all claim to the emirate.

Iraq has made political overtures to new U.S. President Bill Clinton about improving relations.

"With the new administration

we would like to open a new chapter. As far as Iraq is concerned we would like to have normal relations with the United States of America," Mr. Aziz said.

Asked whether Iraq had plans to attack Kuwait again, Mr. Aziz said: "We have no such intentions." But he would not be drawn on whether President Saddam had renounced Iraq's territorial claims to Kuwait altogether, saying only that "this chapter is closed."

Mr. Aziz linked freedom for two Britons imprisoned in Baghdad to the release of Iraqi assets.

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Editorial and advertising offices:
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University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.
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Crisis management

PRIME MINISTER Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker was right to convene a meeting for the heads of the Audit Bureau, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the Administration Control and Inspection Bureau (ACIB) and to caution them against unfair and wrong practices in filling governmental job vacancies. This has been the calling of this prime minister and in fact other prime ministers before him at about this time of every past year. Unfortunately though no concrete results had been achieved in the past so that this government does not have to deal with such problem. It appears that the country has developed deep-rooted or built-in traditions to play favouritism whenever any public sector position becomes vacant or is created to help combat unemployment.

Sharif Zeid knows that pious admonitions or official exhortations cannot achieve the desired results simply because it has become a second nature for officialdom to do the wrong thing when government jobs are filled. That is why perhaps a new thinking about the whole issue has to start taking place.

The only effective way to make appointments sound and fair is to make those responsible for the selection of new civil servants more fair themselves, which may be a tall order in itself. The basic complementary way to accomplish the goal of fairness in this vein is to institutionalise the mechanism of sifting through the candidates' files on the basis of objective criteria. As long as the central government refuses to come to grips with this issue in all its dimensions, all efforts that aim to do more justice in filling vacant jobs in the public will remain mere ink on paper.

Our senior officials must also realise that the other side of hiring personnel, namely that of firing officials from their jobs, must also be fair. It is common knowledge that retiring governmental employees or terminating their employment prematurely is sometimes done on the basis of the personal whims of their bosses. We cannot possibly ignore the inherent wrong in a love or hate relationship between superiors and subordinates in civil service where if friendship is secured there is no limit to the errors of judgement or mistakes that can be committed by officials with impunity. Vice versa, if there are personal frictions, real or imaginary, the slightest dispute can be blown out of proportion and serve as a ready-made pretext to get rid of any unlucky public servant targeted by his superior.

It must be acknowledged that Jordan is still part of the developing countries' club and therefore remains subject to its ways and standards, no matter how much rhetoric is deployed to paint rosy pictures. It is almost a fact of life in all underdeveloped countries to carry on governing in a style that befits underdevelopment with all its trimmings. Until and unless Jordan graduates from this "club" through the running to full course the dynamics of modernisation we simply have to put up with this malaise till better times reach us. Should this continue to be the case, the most that the country can aim for at the time being is crisis management or containment of the problem through the kind hand-aid measures that we have been taking for ages.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AS A FURTHER manifestation of the double-standard policy adopted by the United Nations under pressure from the United States, mediators in Switzerland are now trying to find a compromise solution to the problem of the expellees, which does not ensure their repatriation, said Al Rai daily Sunday. The paper said that while the United States is exerting all efforts to delay any meeting by the Security Council over this matter, and while Washington pursues contacts with the Israelis reassuring them of its support, there are attempts aimed at convincing some of the deportees to return and others to be flown out to another destination but not their homeland. Attempts to achieve this goal clearly violate Security Council Resolution 799 and constitute a bid to avoid forcing Israel to comply with the world community's orders, the paper continued. Should these mediation efforts succeed, the paper said, they would show that the world community has succumbed to Israel's desires and whims and accepted Israel's intransigent position. Escaping any punitive action, Israel will no doubt be encouraged to escalate its atrocities against the Palestinians, killing or deporting more and more Arabs who seek freedom from the occupation, the paper pointed out. The paper said that if Israel was allowed to have its way in this matter, a deadly blow would be dealt to the so-called international legitimacy and the rule of the jungle would come out victorious, to the detriment of a permanent and just peace in the Middle East.

A COLUMNIST IN Al Rai daily expressed the view that the financial grants which Turkey received recently from the Gulf states were only a reward paid for Ankara's hostile attitude towards Iraq and offered by the Gulf states under instructions from Washington and its allies. Tareq Masarweh said that Turkey does not and could not play the role of the defender of the Gulf states in the event of an Iranian attack on them simply due to its limited power and also because the United States forces are in the region providing protection to them. At the same time, Ankara does not have any influence in the Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union, due to an agreement between Moscow and Washington that these republics remain within the Russian sphere, the writer pointed out.

Weekly Political Pulse

Elections should take place on time, after all

By Waleed Sadi

THERE is apparently a strong current among many parliamentarians who call for giving the current Lower House of Parliament a new lease on life by extending its life span a year or more. The justification offered for this proposition is unfinished business associated with the continuing efforts to formally establish political parties in the country. Obviously, there are several factors that need to be taken into consideration when this unusual demand is to be weighed legally and politically. The primary consideration, of course, is the impact such a drastic step, if taken, would have on the fragile and embryonic democratic process in the country.

It must be recalled that parliamentary life in Jordan was kicked off with much fanfare and enthusiasm after a long and damaging hiatus caused by the interruption of the general elections cycle by the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and the separation of the West Bank and the East Bank. The assumption that the parliamentary representatives of the people elected before 1967 could continue to speak for their constituencies and reflect faithfully their thoughts and aspirations was proven wrong time and again, throughout the period that preceded the reintroduction of pluralistic democracy in the country in 1989.

The basic rationale behind rejecting the thesis that parliamentarians can continue to serve as lawful representatives of the people of the country beyond their term is clearly the principle that voters have the inalienable right to hold their spokesmen or spokeswomen accountable every four years. This right cannot and should not be violated or interfered with unless there is a state of emergency, which is not the case nowadays. Besides, electors cast

their votes for their representatives in 1989 with the clear understanding that their term in office will end in four years. Upon the lapse of the four years, parliamentarians lose their legitimacy as people's representatives and forfeit their right to speak for their people. Against this backdrop, it would be less damaging from the democratic process' point of view to suspend parliamentary life than to prolong the duration of Parliament.

From a broader political point of view, Jordan has been boasting about its new political style domestically, regionally and internationally. To suspend the cycle of electioneering now would clearly cast internal and external doubts on the depth of the democratic tradition in the Kingdom, especially at a time when Jordan is capitalising to the fullest on the development and consolidation of democracy. Granted, it would be much better to have formally organised political parties before the country conducts its general elections. But the absence of legally constituted and organised political parties did not prevent the country from going ahead with its 1989 parliamentary elections. As a matter of fact, there was a widespread thought that in spite of the absence of political parties, the Kingdom can still forge a democratic process.

Another point needs to be made in this vein. The whole country knew in 1989, as it now fully appreciates and recognises, that there were and are in the country de facto political currents and parties. To suspend elections till these political formations acquire a de jure status and have sufficient time to spread their gospel is simply untenable and, on balance, counterproductive. There is nothing inherently wrong in allowing Jordanians to go to the

election booths on schedule this year and use the next four years for the purpose of finishing up the job of formally organising political parties, not only in terms of registration with the Ministry of Interior but also in terms of giving their constituencies ample time to comprehend what they are preaching.

It so happens that Jordan is treaty obligated, under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to conduct elections on periodic basis. It is doubtful that the tribunal that monitors state parties' adherence to the covenant would accept the argument now being orchestrated by some parliamentarians that the unfinished business of forming and registering political parties could serve as a legitimate reason to interfere with the democratic process that was painstakingly set into motion only four years ago. Over and above these considerations, the National Charter never envisaged interrupting the democratic process due to the insufficient time left for establishing political parties. There is not the slightest hint in the Charter that such an exigency could offer a politically sound argument in favour of freezing the democratic system in the Kingdom once again and so early after it started.

His Majesty King Hussein's pronouncement has effectively put an end to the lingering speculations about this subject when he told a group of Jordanian journalists that he sees no reason to justify any delay in holding general elections on schedule this year. That was a timely intervention that serves to put the record straight on the continuation of the democratic process, unimpeded by special interests of one faction or another.

Conservatism and fundamentalism in historical perspective

By Dr. Mohammad Rabie

MUCH HAS been written about the revival of religious fundamentalism and its causes and motives. Islamic fundamentalism, in particular, has attracted tremendous attention because of its tendency to resort to violence to achieve its objectives. However, Hindu radicalism in India appears today to be much more violent than Islamic extremism in Egypt, Algeria or even Lebanon. The Jewish Kach religious movement in Israel and the United States has also adopted extremist methods and developed racist thesis to exclude and eliminate non-Jews in Israel. Certain Christian factions in Yugoslavia, in Latin America, in the Philippines and in the United States have also adopted unlawful and immoral tactics to exclude and dehumanise the other.

But despite the profound im-

proved that the West, despite its wealth and power, was very much vulnerable to the disruption of oil supplies as well as to political instability in poorer regions of the world. By the end of the 1970s, the era of diminishing expectations finally arrived in the West as its logic had begun to influence people's thinking and remould their world views and social behaviour.

In the East and the Third World, however, this era began to emerge in the mid-1970s due to the failure of both the political and economic systems of Marxism and Third World socialism. The failure was expressed in the systems' inability to live up to their promises and thus to meet people's expectations. And by the early 1980s, particularly after the eruption of the Third World debt crisis in 1982 and the col-

old institutions usually assume a leading role in debating the present and shaping the future. Religion and the moral values it espouses usually become a major source of individual solace and communal inspiration. Conservatism, meanwhile, becomes a socio-political and national ideology aimed at building a future based on a vision of a more comfortable past. But in so doing, conservatism and religious fundamentalism tend normally to encourage people to modify their attitudes and behavioural patterns in accordance with traditional, outdated institutions and old, largely irrelevant values.

Nevertheless, peoples, particularly oppressed nations and minorities, have always resorted to religion and invoked cultural traditions as means to preserve national and communal identities in the face of socio-economic disorientation and future uncertainty. Yet, they are values, institutions and ideologies whose time has long passed and whose limits had long been exposed and recognised. As such, they are nothing more than convenient means to express frustration, to protest the inadequacy of the existing socio-political order or simply to escape reality and postpone facing the inevitable.

As this change was taking place, conservatism, traditionalism and religious fundamentalism were moving gradually towards convincing people to place ethnic allegiance and personal security, particularly financial security, ahead of national obligations and economic opportunity. And this in turn made people less optimistic regarding the future, expecting less from it and willing to accept less than the present, with its unpleasant anxieties, had to offer. Thus an historical era, characterised by a general human presentment that the future does not promise as much as the past did and a resigned acceptance of the less than was expected to come, had finally arrived and became fully established. And because of its traditional ideological roots and conservative socio-economic outlook, the era of diminishing expectations has become a powerful force influencing both the present and the future.

In the West, the mood of the era of diminishing expectations expressed itself more in socio-economic conservatism and less in religious fundamentalism. This was primarily due to the separation of religion and state and the consequent institutions of political pluralism and freedom of speech. As a result, socio-economic and political conservatism were able to mount in the early 1980s a successful comeback and subsequently dominate the West's economic thinking, political organisation and social attitudes in general.

Today, the consequences of

conservatism can be seen in the global economic recession, in the European unusually high unemployment rates and loss of political direction, in American and British poverty, homelessness and crime, in French and German rising racism and in political corruption and intellectual sterility everywhere. Moreover, socio-economic conservatism in the West was responsible for invigorating social discrimination as a means to define and distinguish the self from the other, particularly in states with distinct racial and national minorities.

Since the era of diminishing expectations had arrived earlier in the West, and because of the West's strong inclination towards rational thinking, it is expected that the mood and logic of this era will come to an end in the not so distant future. The already proven failure of the 1980s economic and social performance will soon cause conservatism in general to lose its legitimacy and popular appeal. In fact, the continued rule of the conservative forces in countries such as the United States, England and Germany has been, due not to their dynamism and foresight, but to the opposition's intellectual bankruptcy, particularly after the collapse of communism.

In the Third World in general, the reaction to the failure of state capitalism and political authoritarianism was expressed more in religious fundamentalism and less in socio-economic conservatism. This was primarily due to the fact that most Third World nations have remained basically traditional in their behaviour and outlook and lacked the freedom of speech and most civil society institutions. As a result, the primary change these societies sought, as the era of diminishing expectations arrived, was in areas related to the belief system anchored in religion and to the political system, emphasising nationalism and cultural particularism.

On the other hand, the collapse of communism and the end of the cold war have moved almost all previously Marxist states towards a combination of western economic conservatism, political democracy and Third World narrow nationalism and cultural particularism. It is a combination that allows extremism to be expressed rather freely and employs democracy to create majority dictatorships that exclude and discriminate against the other, particularly against national, ethnic and religious minorities. And because the age of diminishing expectations had been late in arriving in those countries, religious fundamentalism and narrow nationalism are expected to last well into the first decades of the twenty-first century, causing great human and political damage before being exposed and contained.

Meanwhile, the decade of the 1990s in those countries is expected to represent a transitional stage plagued with political upheavals, severe economic dislocations and much ideological and intellectual disorientation.

In fact, a careful look at the political map of the world will reveal that there is almost no country today that does not face major political, economic and/or social problems. At the same time, no troubled country, including the richest and most powerful, seems to know with confidence how to deal with its problems and how to restructure its fractured or embattled social, economic and political systems. In addition, the traditional tools of economic analysis and economic management, and the political tactics of gaining and maintaining control and legitimacy, seem

fundamentalism and religious fundamentalism will soon fail and reach dead end and that will cost them their popular legitimacy. But it is a failure that is more likely to cause irreparable damage to most existing political and economic structures and established communal socio-cultural relations.

As nations and states, we seem to be entering a new era with no precedents to guide us. Our current experience is similar to that of a driver making a long curve on a rough road that goes through unfamiliar territory. As the driver makes to curve, he loses sight of the landscape behind him and sees the image of the future that lies ahead of him. The speed and control of the vehicle have become subject to the terrain and his expectations and confidence subject to the road's ups and

"Today, the consequences of conservatism can be seen in the global economic recession, in the European unusually high unemployment rates and loss of political direction, in American and British poverty, homelessness and crime, in French and German rising racism and in political corruption and intellectual sterility everywhere. Moreover, socio-economic conservatism in the West was responsible for invigorating discrimination, which had been on the decline, while adding economic and intellectual discrimination as a means to define and distinguish the self from the other, particularly in states with distinct racial and national minorities."

to have become partially or totally inadequate. Meanwhile, life complexity has rendered the nation-state system, regardless of the state's size, power and wealth, too small to handle most international problems and too big to deal with most domestic issues. A rupture in our human historical process seems to have occurred, causing the past to become of little help to guide us into the future, while making the future less certain as judged by the past.

The past with all its myths, facts, and distortions of facts is largely finished as a tool to understand the present, let alone predict the future. The present, meanwhile, seems to have been lost between the past and the future, going through an identity crisis of its own that encompasses almost all aspects of life. And while the future remains uncharted, it appears to have lost its previously claimed connection to both the past and the present. Consequently, it is expected that both socio-economic conser-

downs. It is a process that seems to indicate that we might be experiencing a unique historical discontinuity in our human experience. It is a discontinuity that requires new thinking, new attitudes and new national and international organisations to make the future more predictable and the making of our making than the making of outdated and largely irrelevant traditional forces. Otherwise, our future will be left to certain blind forces that seem to know with certainty what they stand against and to lack a vision of what they stand for.

Prof. Mohammad Rabie is the president of the Centre for Educational Development in Washington, D.C. He is a former professor of economics and an author. He published ten books, the latest of which is "The New World Order", and was in 1992 a fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung. He contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

Clinton has more millionaire aides than Reagan or Bush

By Richard Keil
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Clinton, who made a campaign issue of Republican favouritism of the wealthy, has more millionaires among his top advisers than either Ronald Reagan or George Bush.

Mr. Clinton has at least nine millionaires at the top of his administration, including several well-to-do lawyers and two Wall Street executives whose fortunes dwarf Mr. Clinton's reported \$863,000 in assets.

Among the top cabinet millionaires are Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen, worth at least

\$5.9 million, and Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who is worth at least \$4.2 million.

But even their fortunes are easily topped by the two top economic advisers Mr. Clinton borrowed from Wall Street, Robert Rubin and Roger Altman. Each is worth tens of millions of dollars.

In addition, four other cabinet members and a U.N. ambassador with cabinet level status are millionaires, and five other top aides may well have the distinction, an Associated Press review of their financial disclosure reports reveals.

Another millionaire, Zoe Baird, withdrew her nomination for attorney general last week.

She would have given up a \$500,000-a-year job as a corporate counsel to work for the government.

Mr. Reagan counted seven millionaires in his first administration while Mr. Bush's first cabinet had six.

For Republicans, still smarting from Mr. Clinton's campaign attacks they catered to the wealthy during the 1980s, the composition of the new Democratic cabinet is ironic.

"What they're going to say is, 'our millionaires are better than their millionaires were,'" said former Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher, one of the Bush cabinet's top millionaires. "Being a millionaire should not

be thought of as a negative or a pejorative. But let's face it, there have been claims about populism that have been made, and the reality has obviously been very different," he said.

Michael Deaver, a former Reagan White House aide, said the irony is that many Clinton cabinet appointees made their fortunes during the 1980s when Republican policies held sway.

"They've taken and received the very best of what the '80s had to offer, and they're here saying that the '80s were bad," Mr. Deaver said.

During the campaign, Mr. Clinton repeatedly criticised Mr. Bush for being "out of touch" with average Americans and con-

cerned more with the interests of the wealthy.

For instance, in a Labour Day speech in Independence, Mo., Clinton accused Mr. Bush of waking up "every morning worrying about how to lower taxes one more time on millionaires."

White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers said "wealth had nothing to do" with the Clinton's cabinet picks.

"Clinton chose his cabinet looking for talent and diversity, and I think he got that. I just don't think that was a consideration one way or another," she said.

Alan Brinkley, a Columbia University history professor who specialises in issues of populism,

said he doesn't think the large concentration of millionaires conflicts with the populist themes of Mr. Clinton's campaign. "Remember, 1 million dollars isn't what it used to be. If many don't seem that way to most Americans, but any attorney or well-paid professional, after a number of years at work, stands a good chance to have made 1 million dollars," he said.

In addition to Mr. Bentsen and Mr. Christopher, other cabinet members who are millionaires include Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, worth at least \$2.4 million; Labour Secretary Robert Reich, at least \$1.4 million; and Education Secretary Richard Riley, at least \$1.2 million.

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House panel to study appointments

(Continued from page 1)

The House failed to agree on the composition of the committee and finally limited its membership to nine and asked deputies interested in joining it to register their names at the executive office.

The House will elect a committee if its membership is not settled at the executive office.

While some deputies argued that the formation of the committee diluted the seriousness of the issue and "stole" deputies' right to discuss the issue, others agreed it was the best way to ensure an objective and thorough study of government appointments.

And even though the House agreed not to discuss charges of unfairness in government appointments until after the committee has submitted its report, some deputies who took the floor

reiterated charges that malpractices existed in government hiring procedures and demanded an immediate end to such actions.

Dr. Arabiyat said deputies who have information on nepotism in granting government appointments should present it to the House for debate.

Deputy Leith Shbeilat said "a lot of talk about such practices is heard in the corridors of the House" but is not presented under the dome of parliament.

Deputies, however, agreed not to come forward with information they have about unfair government action until the "fact-finding committee" they formed prepares its report.

The House did not set a date by which the committee should finish its work and is expected to do that Wednesday when it agrees on the committee's members.

Bread prices go up as of today

(Continued from page 1)

However, officials have repeatedly sought to reassure the low-income groups that a total elimination of subsidies for staples was not planned but that a concerted approach aimed at ensuring that only the needy benefit from the subsidies would be followed.

The bulk of the subsidies is spent on wheat; bread by extension. And officials believe that part of it is not reaching the right target it is aimed at.

"A lot of the subsidised wheat/bread is being misused," said a senior official. "In some areas people feed bread to their cattle since it is actually a lot cheaper than fodder."

According to the official, who preferred anonymity, the annual consumption of wheat in Jordan has gone up from 400,000 tonnes a year to 600,000 tonnes — an increase which is not justified even after taking into consideration the presence of up to 300,000 expatriates who have returned home and a noted boost in the number of tourists visiting the Kingdom.

Sugar, rice and milk powder are available only to Jordanian citizens under a coupon system introduced in 1990 in what was described by officials as a means

to ensure that hotels and foreign nationals do not benefit from state subsidies for these items.

The introduction of coupons — which are available only to those who possess the national family registration books — is estimated to have saved the treasury around JD 15 million annually.

The officials argued that it was virtually impossible to introduce a coupon system for bread or to streamline it to ensure that bread subsidies are available only to those who actually need it.

"Why should the government subsidise bread for the rich or the middle-income group or the hotels and restaurants?" asked the senior official. "They won't be hard put to pay the full price of wheat and bread in the international market."

"Subsidies have to be eliminated altogether, sooner or later," said the official. "But that does not mean that it would hurt the poor and the needy."

"We have to find the right mechanism to ensure that the needy and the below-poverty-line people are not affected negatively with the withdrawal of subsidies," the official said.

"There are several ways and means under consideration to achieve this objective," he added without elaboration.

Israel hints at 'goodwill' measure

(Continued from page 1)

this month and handed over a letter from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to Mr. Rabin. But Egypt's efforts to solve the crisis have made no tangible progress so far.

During his four-day stay in Switzerland, Mr. Musa held talks with his Israeli counterpart Shimon Peres who was also attending an international conference.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali recommended last week that the Security Council approve whatever steps were necessary to force Israel to allow the Palestinians back home.

Nabil Shaath, political adviser to Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat, said sanctions were the only

means left to force Israel to comply.

"We will go to Chapter Seven of the United Nations Charter. We will ask for sanctions to be enforced (on Israel). We will ask for the same measures that Boutros-Ghali has recommended," Dr. Shaath told Reuters.

"Everything must be done to make Israel comply... otherwise it will contradict two years of practice by the United States which has convinced Security Council members not to use the veto in cases of international peace and human rights," he added.

Dr. Shaath said the PLO would call for an emergency Arab foreign ministers' meeting if the Security Council failed to act fast.

Israel detains two Arab-Americans

(Continued from page 1)

we revealed, I think that international public opinion should reconsider the attitude, the double attitude to Israel," Mr. Shahal said after the weekly cabinet meeting where ministers were briefed on the arrests.

For the past several weeks, Israeli officials and media have sought to establish connection between Hamas and the United States.

While the government statement mentioned hundreds of thousands of dollars in transfers, it only listed specifically only

\$108,000 given West Bank Palestinians and \$100,000 turned over in the Gaza town of Khan Yunis.

The situation of Mr. Salah and Mr. Jarad first arose last week when Senator Paul Simon asked Israel about their whereabouts. The army at first refused to confirm they were being held.

Israel's ambassador to Washington, Zalman Shoval, said Friday that a third Arab-American had also been arrested. The man is from Virginia but the State Department did not have his name.

Two groups claim ambush

(Continued from page 1)

The Israeli high court's ruling Thursday upholding the expulsions.

"This is the Al Qassam Brigades. We take responsibility for the killing of the two soldiers. It was in retaliation for the high court's decision to approve the deportations," the group said in a telephone call to an international news organisation in occupied Jerusalem.

Qassam has claimed responsibility for the December attacks, two ambushes of Israeli army vehicles and a kidnapping-killing.

Military censors delayed publication of the Saturday attack for 14 hours pending notification of the soldiers' families.

An Israeli officer told reporters two assailants penetrated a security fence surrounding a Jewish settlement's hothouses, then hid behind bushes near the fence until the three soldiers passed in a jeep on an adjacent dirt road.

Gaza commander Brigadier-General Yom Tov Samyeh said the assailants opened fire from a

range of five metres. He said the jeep stopped about 30 metres away. The patrol commander, lightly injured, jumped from the jeep and fired at the assailants, who hit the jeep with some 25 bullets.

Military sources said one of the soldiers killed was a reservist, the other a bedouin. Bedouin soldiers generally serve in the Israeli army as trackers.

The assailants took the dead soldiers' weapons and left behind a submachine gun and six ammunition magazines, they said.

A curfew was clamped immediately on the Khan Yunis area near the attack site after the shooting, and troops fanned out in search of the assailants.

Arab reports said a five-year-old girl was shot and wounded in the ear when troops opened fire on alleged curfew violators. Fourteen other Palestinian youths were reported wounded by gunfire or beatings in clashes after a second ambush on soldiers in Jabalya refugee camp in which none of the troops were injured.

New season opens for 'Welcome, new world order'

Show's artistic quality stirs controversy

By Sansan Ghosheh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — "Welcome, New World Order" reopened Jan. 25 again bringing forth controversy: Is "Welcome, new world order" more of a social phenomenon than an artistic one, or is it a social phenomenon expressed in an artistic form? Can this show be called theatrical art or is it more of a stand-up comedy show? These are some of the questions

that theatre-goers and lovers are asking.

According to Nabil Sawalha, co-writer of and actor in "Welcome, new world order," this show is a "multiplicity of ideas put within a personal theatrical form with a wide margin of liberty." It addresses subjects that affect people's daily lives and it touches on people's pains and problems, he adds.

Hisham Yanis, co-writer and

actor, sees this show as posing some question: Where do Jordan, human rights and the Arab World stand in this new world order.

Welcome, new world order has had the highest attendance of all Jordanian plays. Mr. Yanis believes this show is popular because it reflects "what everybody wanted to say but could not" in the past. That is why, he says, people identify with the show.

The play has been criticised by some artists for "lacking elements of theatrical art."

Zein Ghanma, a stage director and fine arts teacher, says: "In some ways, the show is a piece of art. Some of the acting is done well and that is a form of art, but it is not a complete and coherent piece of art. So there are things that are artistic about it, but all in all no. Some parts are really amateurish."

Ms Ghanma believes that in this show artistic elements can only be seen in the acting, not in the writing or directing. The acting, she says, depends heavily on imitating Jordanian public officials and international figures. It does not create and develop a character. According to Ms. Ghanma, imitating is not theatre.

Some of the audience have accused the play of not having a message and not being thought-provoking. Ms. Ghanma believes that the show provides its audience with "the chance to escape from their problems by laughing at them and not thinking about them." She described this type of stage show as more akin to stand-up comedy.

Mr. Sawalha says these accusations are due to "the standard thinking of putting things into frames to be able to deal with them. It usually comes from people's lack of imagination."

Both he and Mr. Yanis describe their show as a revolutionary form of art that "tore the frames of the old forms of thinking."

Mr. Yanis, defending their way of expressing things, said that other artists, not used to the democratic process that Jordan is experiencing, hide behind symbolism because it is difficult to be blunt and straightforward. He believes that in the future other artists will follow in their footsteps. Adding that Jordan has been suffering from the international literature complex, foreign plays translated into classical Arabic.

"These plays have been unsuccessful because they did not have the spirit of the country and therefore, isolated the people," Mr. Sawalha says that art should relate to the people in order to be successful and wel-

come, new world order has come as a result of thirty years of theatrical experience.

While Mr. Yanis says that each scene has "millions of messages," Mr. Sawalha says that the show has no lesson. He believes that it is enough for the audience to enjoy themselves.

When asked about the possibility of moving beyond the series of sketches into a message-sending play, Mr. Sawalha said that they are "mobile artists" and that they will "keep their pulse on the pulse of the people."

Welcome, new world order has established a new kind of stage show in this country. It reflects the democratisation of Jordan which allows relatively more freedom of speech. People are attracted to this show because it addresses their problems and it is a new phenomenon in the Jordanian theatre. However, it remains to be seen whether people will still be attracted to this type of show once their initial excitement towards these new freedoms fades, or they will want a thought-provoking, blunt play.



"Welcome, new world order"

Rafsanjani expects U.S. to move on ties

(Continued from page 1)

while he saw the regime of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein as a "destabilising" force in the region, he opposed U.S. intervention.

"We do not think the solution is that a power like the United States comes to the region and takes control of the fate of the Iraqi people," he said, adding: "We suspect the intentions of the United States and the West."

Asked about the "death sentence" issued against Mr. Rushdie by Ayatollah Khomeini on Feb. 14, 1989, the Iranian president said: "Nothing can change this because, unfortunately, the leader is deceased, he is not with us and he cannot change the verdict."

Mr. Rushdie has lived in hiding for nearly three years, but in recent months has begun making public appearances in the United States, Britain and the Nordic countries.

Mr. Rafsanjani declined to answer questions about Milton Mayar, 58, an American businessman arrested in Tehran on charges of illegal business dealings.

He said Mr. Mayar's case was a

matter for the Iranian supreme court.

Mr. Mayar, whose arrest was disclosed last November, had operated a travel agency, and Iranian officials alleged his activities involved "links with agents service foreign intelligence services."

Mr. Rafsanjani denied Iran was experiencing economic problems and indicated he would run again for president next June.

He repeated Iran's long-held position that it was willing to cooperate with Iraq if Baghdad frees prisoners taken in the 1980-89 Iran Iraq war and pays compensation.

He called for "bilateral negotiations" to resolve a dispute with the United Arab Emirates over Iran's efforts to take full control of three disputed islands in the Gulf — Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs. The dispute has strained relations with the UAE and its Arab allies in the Gulf.

"We are trying to settle the problems we have with some countries through peaceful means," he said. "But we will never compromise on our principles."

Mr. Rafsanjani, who became president after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, vigorously defended the Iranian revolution's record and his period in office during two and a half hours of critical questioning by foreign reporters.

He said Iran was trying to be a good neighbour and to improve ties with other countries.

Mr. Rafsanjani, who has steered Iran towards a greater political and economic liberalisation, asked why Iran was being asked to change.

"They (the U.S. and the West) must change in relation to us. It is the U.S. that has oppressed us before and after the revolution," he said. "They wanted to continue their imperialist attitude towards this nation... if we had done something to oppress others, then we should also change," he added.

He said an improvement in U.S.-Iranian ties did not seem possible for the moment. "It is incompatible with public opinion and the goals of the revolution," he added.

Mr. Rafsanjani rejected charges that Iran had aggressive intentions towards oil-rich Arab neighbours across the Gulf.

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Courier wins Australian Open

MELBOURNE (AP) — Jim Courier kept his cool under a blazing sun Sunday, even when Stefan Edberg turned up the heat. Courier won 6-2, 6-1, 2-6, 7-5 in the men's singles final at the Australian Open.

In a repeat of his finals victory over Edberg last year, the 22-year-old American thrived in stifling conditions that saw air temperatures soar to 40 C. and rise to 67 C. on the synthetic rebound ace court.

"It's always very special to win a Grand Slam. To come back and defend it makes it twice as special," Courier said.

As he did last year, Courier celebrated his win by diving fully clothed into the murky Yarra River for a brief swim with coach Brad Stine.

The river runs alongside the National Tennis Centre complex, and Courier was cheered by dozens of fans.

"At least this year I knew it was the 18th dirtiest river in the world," he said.

Courier said he found difficulty breathing in the sultry conditions.

"The hotter the better," he said before the match. And the Florida native did cope better with the heat than Edberg, who wilted as Courier kept exerting pressure with a mixture of depth and deftness.

"It's quite impossible to play your best tennis in that heat," Edberg said. "In the first two sets I didn't feel like I belonged in the match at all."

Courier roared through the first two sets in just 62 minutes, dropping only five points on serve and breaking No. 2 seed Edberg four times.

Edberg then rallied in the third set as the top seed went into an inexplicable slump.

The Swedish two-time champion broke Courier's previously impregnable serve three times and the American appeared to have lost concentration as he made a succession of errors of the kind that were totally alien to his game in the first two sets.

World No. 1 Courier made eight of his 14 unforced errors in the third set as Edberg chipped and charged.

Encouraged, Edberg, ranked No. 2, kept his poise despite making eight foot faults, and pushed Courier right through the fourth set.

It was a stirring comeback, but Courier didn't let it last.

"I just played as hard as I could the whole time," he said. "It was the same temperature on both sides of the court."

The final set took 53 minutes as



Jim Courier of the U.S. holds the Australian Open trophy after beating Sweden's Stefan Edberg Sunday (AFP photo)

both players struggled to keep up with the ferocious, early pace. Edberg served five of his nine double faults in the last set.

"He played a great match coming back," Courier said.

Courier raised his hands in triumph, then squatted and

pumped his fists before throwing his cap toward his chair.

He won the fourth Grand Slam title of his career and has a 4-1 record in Grand Slam finals. He has won the last two French Opens.

Overall, it was the 10th singles title of his career and his first since the French Open.

He now is 16-2 in matches at the Australian Open.

Edberg, 27, dipped to 6-5 in Grand Slam finals but paid tribute to Courier.

"He played unbelievable tennis," he said. "He didn't make any mistakes in the first two sets."

Edberg said he would have been against playing the final indoors despite the heat and said he adjusted as the match progressed.

"At one stage I felt like death, but I started to feel a lot better," he said. "I wouldn't have minded playing a fifth set, but he was too strong in the end."

Courier said he, too, would have refused to play if officials had sought to close the centre-court roof to keep out the sun. It was closed several times this week for rain.

"I wouldn't have come out, and then they'd have been real stuck," he joked.

Courier earned U.S. \$278,800 for his victory, while Edberg collected \$139,400.

Edberg discarded his baseball cap at 2-5 in the first set, finding it shaded him but also hampered his serve.

"It didn't work. I wasn't used to it," he said. "I started to watch the cap and not the ball."

He also did not wear the back support he has been wearing after suffering muscle spasms earlier in the tournament.

"I would have died in that today," he said.

Gigi Fernandez of the U.S. (left) and teammate Natalia Zvereva of Belarus wear their Akubra hats and hold the Australian Open women's doubles trophy. They beat Pam Shriver of the U.S. and Elizabeth Smylie of Australia (AFP photo)

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Ipswich topple Manchester United, Norwich go top

LONDON (Agencies) — Manchester United tumbled off the top of the English Premier League Saturday when a blunder by Danish goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel set Ipswich on the way to a 2-1 home win.

Aston Villa lost 2-0 at lowly Southampton, allowing Ipswich's near-neighbours Norwich to return to the top with a 1-0 win at Everton.

Ipswich striker Chris Kiwomya ran the ball into an empty net in the 21st minute after Schmeichel, coming out to clear, completely misjudged.

Canadian international defender Frank Yallop made it 2-0 for Ipswich, who have only lost once at home this season, with a powerful drive two minutes after the break.

European Soccer

Scotland's Brian McClair pulled one back six minutes from time for a lacklustre United, whose 12-match unbeaten run and six-game winning streak came to an abrupt halt.

Norwich have 48 points, one more than United and Villa who were separated only by goal difference at the top before their surprise defeats. Ipswich moved into fourth place on 42 points.

Brian Clough's Nottingham Forest climbed off the bottom of the table after 23 weeks with a 2-0 home win over Oldham, who take over in the basement on goal difference. Ian Woan scored both goals.

Patrick McGinlay scored twice for Hibernian.

Steven was carried off after injuring a thigh four minutes from time and could miss the top-of-the-table clash at Aberdeen Tuesday.

Second-placed Aberdeen, five points behind Rangers, won 4-1 at Falkirk, Eoin Jess scoring two.

Meanwhile champions Marseille gave Auxerre their first home defeat for two years and intensified the battle for the French Soccer League title.

Top club Monaco were held to a goalless draw at Lens and their lead was cut to two points, while contenders Nantes suffered a 2-0 reverse at Le Havre.

Paris St Germain demolished Lille 3-0 to edge into second place on goal difference ahead of Nantes and Marseille.

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doubt with three minutes to go as Bernard Tapie's star-studded team pursued their dream of a fifth consecutive title.

Rivals Paris St Germain were equally impressive, with George Weah, Laurent Fournier and Amara Simba scoring the goals which sank relegation-threatened Lille.

Monaco lead the 20-strong table with 33 points from 23 games, with PSG, Nantes and Marseille all on 31.

In Amsterdam, PSV Eindhoven's hopes of a quick return to the top of the Dutch First Division were dashed when they slumped to an embarrassing 3-0 home defeat by RKC Waalwijk Saturday.

Feyenoord Rotterdam, 1-0 winners over Fortuna Sittard, remain top by two points.

PSV, missing key players Hans Van Breukelen (hand injury), Gica Popescu (hamstring), Erwin Koeman (knee), Juul Ellerman (ankle) and Adri van Tiggelen (suspended), never approached their best form.

In Spain, Real Madrid beat arch-rivals Barcelona 2-1 and eight players were booked in a fierce Spanish League battle in front of a capacity 96,000-crowd Saturday.

Ivan Zamorano and Michel Gonzalez scored the goals which lifted Real above Barcelona into second place in the table, a point behind Deportivo Coruna.

Chelsea's Frank Sinclair (below) comes off worst after a tackle with Sheffield Wednesday's Paul Warhurst. Sheffield won 2-0

Norwegian striker Frank Strandli celebrated his debut for defending champions Leeds by opening the scoring in a 3-0 home win over Middlesbrough. He scored midway through the second half, 11 minutes after coming on as a substitute for Rod Wallace.

Leeds, beaten at home just once this season although winless away in the league, went further ahead through England midfielder David Batty and defender Chris Fairclough in the last eight minutes.

Sheffield Wednesday extended their unbeaten run to nine games with a 2-0 victory at Chelsea.

In other Premier League



David Batty (left) scores his first goal of the season for Leeds United in the match against Middlesbrough. Leeds won 3-0 (AFP photo)

matches Wimbledon beat Coventry 2-0. Tottenham defeated Crystal Palace 3-1. Manchester City overcame Blackburn 3-2 and Queens Park Rangers scored a 2-1 win over Sheffield United.

Scottish Premier Division leaders Rangers won a seven-goal thriller at Hibernian, six goals coming in the final 21 minutes.

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Monaco lead the 20-strong table with 33 points from 23 games, with PSG, Nantes and Marseille all on 31.

In Amsterdam, PSV Eindhoven's hopes of a quick return to the top of the Dutch First Division were dashed when they slumped to an embarrassing 3-0 home defeat by RKC Waalwijk Saturday.

Feyenoord Rotterdam, 1-0 winners over Fortuna Sittard, remain top by two points.

PSV, missing key players Hans Van Breukelen (hand injury), Gica Popescu (hamstring), Erwin Koeman (knee), Juul Ellerman (ankle) and Adri van Tiggelen (suspended), never approached their best form.

In Spain, Real Madrid beat arch-rivals Barcelona 2-1 and eight players were booked in a fierce Spanish League battle in front of a capacity 96,000-crowd Saturday.

Ivan Zamorano and Michel Gonzalez scored the goals which lifted Real above Barcelona into second place in the table, a point behind Deportivo Coruna.

Chelsea's Frank Sinclair (below) comes off worst after a tackle with Sheffield Wednesday's Paul Warhurst. Sheffield won 2-0

Norwegian striker Frank Strandli celebrated his debut for defending champions Leeds by opening the scoring in a 3-0 home win over Middlesbrough. He scored midway through the second half, 11 minutes after coming on as a substitute for Rod Wallace.

Leeds, beaten at home just once this season although winless away in the league, went further ahead through England midfielder David Batty and defender Chris Fairclough in the last eight minutes.

Sheffield Wednesday extended their unbeaten run to nine games with a 2-0 victory at Chelsea.

In other Premier League

matches Wimbledon beat Coventry 2-0. Tottenham defeated Crystal Palace 3-1. Manchester City overcame Blackburn 3-2 and Queens Park Rangers scored a 2-1 win over Sheffield United.

Scottish Premier Division leaders Rangers won a seven-goal thriller at Hibernian, six goals coming in the final 21 minutes.

Mark Hateley, with two goals, Trevor Steven and prolific Scotland striker Ally McCoist, with his 38th of the season, gave Rangers a 4-3 victory.

Patrick McGinlay scored twice for Hibernian.

Steven was carried off after injuring a thigh four minutes from time and could miss the top-of-the-table clash at Aberdeen Tuesday.

Financial Markets
Jordan Times
In co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (January 25-January 29, 1993)

AMMAN — The dollar surprised many by staging a significant recovery at the end of last week, rising above the psychologically important 1.60 mark level again. The rebound was based on new positive indications of the state of the U.S. economic recovery, but the short-term direction of the dollar remains unclear.

The long anticipated descent of the British pound finally materialised, on the other hand, as sterling dropped below the \$1.50 and below 2.4 marks. The end of the week thus saw the dollar higher by 1.3 per cent against the mark, two per cent higher against the Swiss franc, and 2.9 per cent higher against the pound.

The Japanese currency maintained its resilience, as the yen ended the week 0.4 per cent higher against the dollar. Having declined by more than two pence the previous Friday, when it closed below 1.60 marks, the dollar lost further ground Monday breaching 1.58 marks to close at 1.5770 marks in New York.

Analysts attributed the dollar's weakness to changes in short-run market outlook, rather than medium and long term expectations. They maintained that at the end of 1992, many market participants had taken long term positions on the dollar based on expectations that the five per cent differential between U.S. and German interest rates will start to decline by early 1993.

Over the last two weeks, however, expectations became more established that the wide interest rate differential will not decline before the second quarter of the year, as the Bundesbank emphasised repeatedly that it was still too early to cut interest rates.

Moreover, there was uncertainty over the U.S. domestic economic plans of President Clinton, and accordingly towards the near term direction of U.S. interest rates. The December employment report that was released on Jan. 8th only served to fuel further doubts about the pace of the U.S. economic recovery.

The result was that many traders resigned to expectations that the dollar's major appreciation against the mark and other European currencies was still further away, and to the possibility that the dollar is susceptible to further technical declines in the short run. Observers commented that all this uncertainty gave dominance to technical factors and short term considerations, particularly in view of the opportunity cost of holding dollar balances. In the process, some traders even sided 1.53 marks as a possible short term target.

The Bank of England surprised many Tuesday by announcing a one per cent cut in the Base Rate to six per cent; its lowest level in six years. Sterling hence declined significantly, helping the dollar to rise modestly against European currencies.

U.S. GDP figures released Thursday revealed that the U.S. economy grew at a real annualised rate of 3.8 per cent in the fourth quarter of 1992, at a time when market expectations centered on 3.1 per cent only. But the release of a startlingly strong Durable Goods Orders report at the end of the week sparked waves of dollar short covering, which pushed the dollar beyond 1.60 marks, closing in New York at 1.6113 marks.

Market commentators reported that the unambiguously strong data, combined with the GDP results, changed the outlook towards the pace of U.S. economic recovery, again, particularly when compared with the rest of the industrialised countries, thus shifting market focus away from the technical domain.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	22/1/93 Close	29/1/93 Close	Percent Change
Sterling Pound	1.5312	1.4870	(2.89)%
Deutsche Mark	1.5900	1.6113	(1.32)%
Swiss Franc	1.4585	1.4880	(1.98)%
French Franc	5.3785	5.4515	(1.34)%
Japanese Yen	125.11	124.45	0.37 %

USD Per STD Euro-Currency Interest Rates

Currency	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)
U.S. Dollar	3.00	3.62	3.00	3.62
Japanese Yen	3.71	3.37	3.50	3.31

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding 100,000 S.D. Dollars, 1,000,000 of equivalent.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 31/1/1993

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.688	0.690
Sterling Pound	1.0217	1.0268
Deutsche Mark	0.4268	0.4289
Swiss Franc	0.4618	0.4641
French Franc	0.1261	0.1267
Japanese Yen	0.5519	0.5547
Dutch Guilder	0.3790	0.3809
Swedish Krona	0.09420	0.09470
Italian Lira	0.0461	0.0463
Belgian Franc	0.02071	0.02081

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Punt devaluation leaves French franc, Danish crown open to market guns

PARIS (R) — Financial markets have aimed a stake at the heart of the European Community's (EC) exchange rate mechanism (ERM) by forcing a devaluation of the Irish punt.

Now, apart from the core currencies of Germany and the Benelux countries, only the French franc and the Danish crown have managed to resist pressure for a devaluation to help ease the pain of Europe's gathering recession.

Encouraged by the handsome profits pocketed by betting against the punt, which was devalued by 10 per cent Saturday, the markets may now train their guns on the two hold-outs.

"My suspicion is that there is a risk of seeing an attack on the next two currencies in line — the French franc and the Danish crown," said Jean-Francois Mer-

ciat, an economist at Salomon Brothers, a U.S. securities house.

Ministers said they hoped the punt's devaluation would restore calm to the ERM, which pens currencies within pre-set bands, after four months of turmoil.

Britain and Italy withdrew from the grid in September and Spain and Portugal had to devalue in November, Spain for the second time in weeks.

Mr. Mercier said unrest could continue until Germany's Bundesbank, which calls the shots in the ERM, was sure it had won the fight against inflation and started to reduce interest rates.

"My initial reaction is that it won't halt the speculation until German rates fall significantly," he said.

The franc and crown have

already fended off fierce attacks.

France spent 160 billion francs (\$30 billion) defending the franc in September and almost as much again early this month.

The battle for the franc is without doubt more important for the future of the ERM and the EC's plans to create a single currency by the end of the century.

First, Denmark has said it will opt out of economic and monetary union. Second, France and Germany have staked great political capital on maintaining a stable franc/mark rate, which they regard as the launch pad for economic and monetary union.

As such, devaluation could well derail the process of closer economic and political integration that drives the EC.

Few doubt the determination of the Socialist government of Prime Minister Pierre Berégovoy to repel any new attack. The Bank of France, which raised its overnight lending rate on Jan. 5 to 12 per cent from 10 per cent, would not hesitate to raise it further if necessary, economists said.

France, unlike Ireland, can count on more than just verbal support from Germany. The Bundesbank, Germany's central bank, has intervened frequently to buy francs before ERM rules required it to do so. But nagging doubts remain.

The essential lesson to the currency turbulence since last summer is that, when growth is weak and unemployment is rising, there is a limit to the price society — political parties, businessmen, unions and mortgage payers — will pay to defend the sometimes abstract notion of a fixed ex-

change rate.

For Ireland, that pain threshold was passed last Friday when the country's two main commercial banks raised their lending rates to customers to a dizzying 28 per cent.

At that point, despite strong economic fundamentals of low inflation and a small government deficit, the game was up.

The markets, whose job is to test the consistency of government policies, had probed and found weakness.

"In due course the franc and the crown will come under pressure because the picture of high interest rates, low growth and high unemployment is no better for them than for Ireland," said George Magnus, an economist with S.G. Warburg Securities.

The crunch in France could come after general elections on March 21 and 28. The leaders of the main centre-right opposition parties that are expected to win power have pledged allegiance to a strong franc.

A few prominent right-wing mavericks want the franc to be floated because they believe that, after an initial dip as interest rates are cut, the currency would appreciate.

Charles Pasqua, who campaigned against the EC's Maastricht treaty on economic, monetary and political union, repeated that view in a newspaper interview Sunday.

Financial markets remember how Edouard Balladur, widely tipped as the next prime minister, promptly devalued the franc when he took office as finance minister in 1986, even though France had a tidy balance of payments surplus.

Iran grappling with gaping payments deficit

TEHRAN (R) — Iran's unblemished record of paying its bills on time to foreign companies has been swept away by a cash crunch that has delayed payments for months, diplomats and businessmen have said.

"The town is full of people chasing after their money," said a senior Western diplomat in Tehran.

"Iran's image in terms of payments was impeccable, but not any more. It's like virginity — once it's gone, it's gone forever," he said.

A senior member of parliament indicated last week that Iran had chalked up \$30 billion in short-term commercial debt — almost two years of income from its oil exports.

The problem, which started in mid-1992, was among the "important worries" of Majlis (parliament) members and committees currently debating the budget for the year starting March 21, Resalat newspaper said.

Western diplomats said despite central bank assurances that the problem would go away soon, some firms had been told they would have to wait a further 12 to 15 months for payment.

One diplomat said Iran should be able to ride out the problem in several years but in the meantime a large "risk factor" would be built into every foreign transaction.

Businessmen say the problem disrupted trade in anything from household goods to oil drilling equipment.

An Iranian importer said a German company that sold him door knobs had shipped the goods seven months ago but was still waiting for the central bank to authorise payment.

"Such companies now add a 30-35 per cent markup to new orders unless you pay cash," he said.

A central bank official, asked to comment on the problem, told Reuters that only Governor Mohammad Hossein Adeli could speak on such matters.

Mr. Adeli is attending the annual World Economic Forum of business and government leaders in the Swiss resort of Davos. Iran is dependent on imports for a wide variety of consumer and capital goods and a large portion of its food.

Foreign exchange spending soared 56 per cent to \$30.9 billion in the last Iranian year when revenue was little over \$16 billion, according to a state Plan and Budget Organisation report quoted by Resalat.

Businessmen see little prospect of quick improvement because the government has no ready source of cash except oil income from a relatively glutted market.

The draft budget projects next year's oil income at about \$17 billion, slightly more than this year's level.

Mr. Adeli said last year that Iran, which is using up to \$17 billion in foreign credits to build major projects in its five-year plan to March 1994, would not take out long-term loans to patch up its balance of payments difficulties.

Qorbanali Dorri Najafabadi, the head of the Majlis Plan and Budget Commission, was quoted by Resalat as saying President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani inherited \$12 billion in foreign commitments from the previous government when he took office in August 1989. A further \$18 billion had been added since.

Newspapers critical of Mr. Rafsanjani's economic policies have blamed his free-market reforms for the cash crunch. They say too much went on consumer goods and too little on economic development.

Mr. Adeli rejected the charge. He told the Majlis in the budget debate that some deficit was expected because the five-year plan had packed most capital investments into the first three years. He envisaged a payment surplus in the remaining two.

Officials expect the government to spend \$4 billion less than it earns this year. The Majlis has told the government to further trim the accumulated deficit by \$4-\$5 billion next year.

"God willing, the foreign commitments will be phased out in the next several years," Resalat said.

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Soldiers target opposition leaders in Zaire unrest

BRAZZAVILLE, Congo (Agencies) — Following two days of riots, troops attacked the homes of government opponents Sunday, killing at least one person, a human rights leader said.

Buane Kabue, leader of the Zaire Human Rights League, also said at least 100 people had died in two days of rioting that began when Zairian regular army troops refused to be paid with apparently worthless 5-million Zaire notes newly printed at the orders of President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Mr. Kabue and others reached by phone from Brazzaville said Kinshasa was quiet Sunday morning, with little traffic. An overnight curfew has been imposed.

The French ambassador and six other foreigners were killed during the violence Thursday and Friday, and France and Belgium have sent troops to help evacuate their nationals.

Ten French soldiers arrived Friday to guard the embassy and about 60 French soldiers originally refused permission to enter Kinshasa crossed the Congo River about 10 a.m. (0900 GMT) Sunday.

Mr. Mobutu warned the Belgian soldiers not to cross the

Congo river from Brazzaville to Kinshasa, saying they did not have authority to intervene in their former colony. He said he would arrange for the evacuation of any foreigners who wanted to leave.

The presidential yacht intercepted a ferry full of Belgian refugees Saturday, forcing them to disembark and board the yacht for the 15-minute ride to Brazzaville.

Belgium and France sent soldiers into the Zairian capital in September 1991 when unpaid troops rioted, triggering the evacuation of more than 20,000 foreigners.

Zaire's already impoverished economy collapsed, but Mr. Mobutu has refused to cede control of the treasury, military or other important institutions to a transitional government he appointed under pressure from his former cold war backers.

Belgium said it would keep its paratroopers in Brazzaville for the time being to avoid risking the lives of foreigners still in Kinshasa.

Opposition leaders in Brussels said Mr. Mobutu's elite Presidential Guard, armed with heavy weapons and supported by

armoured vehicles, were attacking any soldiers deemed to be loyal to the opposition.

The son of Frederic Kibassa Maliba died when soldiers fired rockets at his home in the suburb of Binza just before daybreak Sunday, said Mr. Kabue.

Mr. Kibassa is president of the Sacred Union opposition coalition which represents President Mobutu Sese Seko's arch-enemy, Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi. Mr. Kibassa is also a member of the High Council of the republic, the country's interim legislature, which has been at loggerheads with Mr. Mobutu since convening late last year to pave the way for elections.

Mr. Kabue said soldiers Friday stormed and looted the home of Zaire's foreign minister, opposition figure Pierre Lungi, and raped Belgian nuns who lived adjacent to him. Belgium has confirmed the rape of the nuns. Mr. Lungi was unharmed.

The violence erupted when Mr. Mobutu paid troops with the new bank notes — declared worthless by Mr. Tshisekedi — and they went on the rampage because merchants would not accept the currency.

At least 400 Belgian troops

were in Brazzaville, the Congolese capital across the river from Kinshasa, and 200 more were expected to arrive Sunday.

Zaire's military chiefs, in a clear warning to Belgian troops not to risk a landing, have declared a riverside area of the riot-torn capital an "operational zone."

Officials in Paris said France began evacuating about 100 nationals from Kinshasa Sunday, ferrying them under military escort across the Zaire River to Brazzaville.

After two days of looting by mutinous soldiers former colonial power Belgium rushed 300 paratroops Saturday to Brazzaville, the Congolese capital across the river from Kinshasa.

A statement from Kinshasa's governor, read on television Saturday night, said the wealthy Gombe district was now sealed off from the rest of the city.

"Entrance from now on requires a special permit issued by the military security services," it said.

By sealing off Gombe, where the laws of embassy compounds stretch down to the river bank, Mr. Mobutu has effectively banned any landing by the Belgians.



Croatian President Franjo Tudjman (centre) is given a tour of the village of Orno, in the Krajina region, which was recently liberated by Croat forces during their offensive. Orno had formally been occupied by Serb forces. (AFP Photo)

Croats, Muslims observe Bosnia truce

BELGRADE (R) — A ceasefire between Muslim and Croat fighters appeared to be working in central Bosnia Sunday but its capital Sarajevo shook under an intense artillery barrage.

The ceasefire came into force at 8 a.m. (0700 GMT) in a region south of the mixed Muslim-Croat town of Zenica where forces of the two communities, nominal allies in a civil war with Serbs, have been clashing with increasing ferocity.

British U.N. peacekeeping troops said the area was quiet after the deadline.

In Sarajevo, the Muslim-controlled radio said the outskirts of the old town were being shelled heavily after fighting on Saturday in which 18 people were killed and 30 wounded.

Incidents elsewhere in the former Yugoslav republic were sporadic.

The Sarajevo clashes Saturday, described by the radio as "one of the most difficult days of the war," occurred as Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic offered to let the U.N. run the besieged city of 380,000 people.

"We have already offered that the United Nations should administer the city of Sarajevo. We are ready to hand over the city of Sarajevo to the United Nations as we have already handed over the airport of Sarajevo," Mr. Karadzic told Reuters TV on arrival in Belgrade from Geneva.

International mediators said Saturday they would be turning to the United Nations for support after Bosnia's Muslim-led government refused to sign key parts of a peace plan in Geneva.

Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, co-chairmen of the Geneva talks, said they would be flying to New York Monday. The leaders of the three Bosnian factions were expected to follow them.

Only the Bosnian Croats signed up for a comprehensive three-part peace package while the Serbs and Muslims both signed the constitutional principles for a Bosnian state.

Mr. Karadzic also signed a military ceasefire accord, but neither he nor Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic agreed to endorse a map of the proposed division of Bosnia into 10 provinces.

Cedric Thornberry, deputy commander of the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) went to the Serb-held Krajina enclave in Croatia Sunday to discuss securing a ceasefire after an offensive by Croatian troops to recover lost territory.

Croatian President Franjo Tudjman warned Saturday that his government was prepared to fight on to retrieve Serb-held territory if it could not be reclaimed peacefully.

"We will continue to try to liberate all of Croatia using peaceful means," Mr. Tudjman said after visiting the site of a key bridge captured by Croats from the Serbs during a military offensive which began eight days ago.

"But if it is necessary, we've now shown that we are ready... to liberate every foot of Croatian territory," he said.

Serb honorees their promise not to attack Krajina's Perucica

Dam, ruptured during fighting between Croats and retreating Serbs and now pouring water into a valley occupied by 20,000 people.

Serb leaders have denied their forces detonated sabotage mines and blamed the damage on Croatian artillery.

British engineers who inspected the dam Sunday saw a gaping new crater which appeared on the surface overnight but praised safety measures taken so far by their Croatian counterparts.

Meanwhile the vice-president of the rump state of Yugoslavia has asked the president of the Security Council to take steps to lift sanctions, saying his country had fulfilled almost all the required conditions.

In a letter made public Friday, Radoje Konic said the sanctions had adversely affected all sections of the population and particularly 600,000 refugees from the war-torn areas of the former Yugoslavia who he said had not received even the minimum of relief aid from the world community.

In a separate development, Germany's Defence Minister Volker Ruehe said Saturday he supported the lifting of a U.N. arms embargo affecting Bosnia to enable government forces there to defend themselves against rebel Serbs.

And his views, expressed at an international meeting of political and business leaders, were echoed by representatives of Albania and Turkey, who also argued for international air strikes against Serb positions.

EL PASO, Texas (R) — A 68-year-old Catholic nun ordered to leave town within 48 hours because of a feud with local church officials led the deadline pass Friday without budging from her convent.

Sister Rose Michael Jbara said the ultimatum issued by El Paso Bishop Raymond Pena was "a tragedy and unlawful." "I don't let anyone push me around," said Sister Jbara, who has lived in the Loretto Convent in El Paso since 1967. "They can't force me out." A spokesman for the diocese, the Rev. Ed Roden-Lucero, told Reuters the nun had been asked to leave town because "Sister Rose Michael has a history of making rather serious and outrageous accusations against people in the diocese" and said that recently she staged a public demonstration accusing church officials of heresy.

Angolan rivals fail to agree on ceasefire

ADDIS ABABA (Agencies) — The Angolan government and its UNITA foes failed to agree on a ceasefire after four days of talks which ended Saturday but they resolved to meet again in 10 days in pursuit of peace.

A final communiqué said the two sides would meet again in the Ethiopian capital on Feb. 10 to try to breathe life into a 1991 peace pact which was supposed to end Angola's 16-year civil war.

"The government of Angola and UNITA express their objective to maintain and strengthen a direct political dialogue which will lead once again to the respect of the ceasefire throughout the national territory," the statement said.

But the talks failed to end battles raging on several fronts or to fix a date for the second round of presidential elections which were halted by the conflict and which had been supposed to crown a return to peace and democracy.

Margaret Anstee, the United Nations' special representative for Angola, declined to say why a ceasefire could not be reached if both sides wanted peace.

"These are very sensitive issues," she said.

Delegates said UNITA wanted the dismantling of a riot police force but had rejected a government offer to disband it and put its men under the control of the U.N. monitoring operation.

Asked why no end to the fighting could be agreed, both UNITA and government delegation chiefs said more time was needed to study the origins and implications of the conflict.

"We do not consider the next 10 days will be days of war, but of reflection to solve our problems," said UNITA's Eugenio Manuavakola.

"This is a meeting which could bring back hope to the people of Angola. The fact that we are meeting again means a lot of hope," he added.

Government delegation leader Faustin Muteka told the same news briefing: "A complex problem requires a lot of preparation. We should not prejudice ourselves."

"We have to be very careful to allow us to build confidence so that the next meeting can go as we want."

The aim of the talks is to reinstate a 1991 peace deal which ended war between the formerly pro-Soviet Luanda government and its pro-Western UNITA enemies.

UNITA (The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) disputed the results of landmark general elections last September and at least 2,000 people have been killed in clashes between the two armies.

Meanwhile, rebels reportedly have closed in on a town in northeastern Angola that is near the country's diamond-mining region.

Government military sources Saturday said rebels appeared to be gaining ground near Sauro, 800 kilometres away from Luanda, the capital. Sauro is the gateway to diamond mines in northern Lunda Norte province.

It was not possible to independently verify the reports of rebel troop movements.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Officer accused of bid to kill Yeltsin

MOSCOW (R) — An army major has been seized in government buildings in Moscow and charged with planning to kill Russian President Boris Yeltsin with a knife, ITAR-TASS News Agency said. TASS said the unnamed officer was detained by security guards as he hid in the attic of a government building early last Wednesday — a few hours before Mr. Yeltsin left Moscow on a trip to India. The man, who was armed with a knife when arrested, had intended to attack the 61-year-old Russian leader as he stepped from his car. TASS reported, quoting military prosecutors. He did not get near Mr. Yeltsin, who was preparing to leave for his trip and whose office is in the Kremlin, about 300 metres away from the Staraya Ploshchad Complex where the officer was waiting. TASS said the major had told military interrogators that he considered it his "military and civil duty" and his "contribution to the cause of socialism" to kill Mr. Yeltsin.

Manila: Talks with army rebels still on

MANILA (R) — Philippine Defence Secretary Renato De Villa denied Saturday that talks with army rebels had been suspended after military dissidents accused the government of reneging on an agreement to free all leftist rebels. "Our panel is resolving it. There's nothing to be excited about. The peace process will go on," Gen. De Villa told reporters. Former General Edgardo Abenina, chief negotiator for rebels responsible for three of six coup attempts since 1986, told reporters Friday talks with a government panel were called off. "Unless the government complies fully with the agreement, no talks with them will be held," Gen. Abenina declared. He also questioned whether the government panel was authorised by President Fidel Ramos to negotiate with the rebels and guarantee implementation of any agreement reached. "They have the authority of the president to be in the panel and represent the government in the talks," Gen. De Villa said.

Car bomb kills 16 in Colombia

BOGOTA (AP) — A powerful car bomb exploded Saturday in a commercial district, killing at least 16 people and injuring 33, radio reported. Police said at least four children were killed when the 220-pound (100-kg) bomb went off in an area crowded with shoppers looking for school supplies. At least 100 buildings were damaged. RCN Radio quoted prosecutors in its report on the casualties. The report could not immediately be confirmed. Bodies were strewn about in streets covered with debris and broken glass. A police officer told the Caracol Radio Network that passers-by took off their jackets to cover the dead. There was no claim of responsibility for the bombing, but suspicion fell on the leader of the Medellin drug cartel, Pablo Escobar, who escaped from prison in July and later announced plans to commit terrorist acts.

16 die in Indonesia plane crash

JAKARTA (AP) — A Malaysian plane carrying Singaporeans died to salvage oil from a ruptured supertanker crashed into a mountain in North Sumatra, killing 16 aboard, officials said Sunday. Lt. Jaka Suprianta, a spokesman for the Search and Rescue Agency, said the aircraft was broken in pieces, and efforts were being made to evacuate the bodies from the site. The plane, carrying 11 passengers and five crew members, was reported missing shortly after it took off in bad weather Saturday. Lt. Suprianta said the plane crashed into Mount Kapur, about 110 kilometres from the north Sumatra capital of Medan and 1,500 kilometres (940 miles) northwest of Jakarta. Officials said bad weather and rugged mountain conditions had delayed rescue teams, including soldiers, in reaching the site. The Skyvan aircraft, belonging to Pan Malaysian Transport Pte. Ltd., took off from Medan Airport and crashed about 30 minutes later, they said. The plane was on its way to Banda Aceh, the capital of Aceh province.

15 hurt in Singapore Hilton fire

SINGAPORE (R) — A fire at Singapore's Hotel Hilton International injured 15 people, a civil defence spokesman said. "Fifteen people, including some hotel guests and staff, mostly suffering from smoke inhalation, were sent to hospital," he told a news conference. The fire, reported at around 8 a.m. (Friday midnight GMT) and extinguished two hours later, originated in the hotel's electrical room on the second floor, he said. Earlier, a civil defence spokeswoman said the fire broke out following an explosion at the hotel's switchroom. A police spokesman said he did not suspect arson or foul play. "The fire could be of an electrical origin," he said.

Lung recipient is in good condition

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A woman whose life was saved when her parents donated parts of their lungs in a landmark transplant operation was in good condition, as were her parents, a doctor said. Stacy Sewell, 22, was taken off a respirator and was resting in an intensive care ward separated from her father's room by a glass wall, said Dr. Robin Cohen, who assisted Dr. Vaughn Starnes in the surgeries. "She is awake, alert, and feels wonderful at being able to take a deep breath," Dr. Cohen said. "She's looking very strong. We're cautiously, extremely optimistic." Before the operation Miss Sewell, whose lungs were ravaged by cystic fibrosis, was expected to live about a week, doctors said. Her parents, James Sewell, 55, and Barbara Sewell, 49, were to be released in four to five days, doctors said. Miss Sewell was given parts of her parents' lungs during Friday's surgery.

Kenya train crash toll reaches 140

DARAJANI, Kenya (R) — At least 140 people have been killed and more than 200 are missing in Kenya's worst train crash.

Search teams said Sunday they had found only two survivors from five submerged coaches of the Mombasa-Nairobi train that plunged off a bridge into a flooded river called God Save Us.

Part of the train was washed up to 1.5 kilometres downstream and officials said divers were searching for more bodies that had been carried away or were still trapped under wreckage.

Kenya Railways Corporation Chairman Jeremiah Musuva said only about 200 of the train's 600 passengers had been accounted for.

"I am afraid there are two tourists killed but we have not begun identifying victims in earnest yet. We are just fishing out the bodies," a police spokesman said. One foreign victim was identified as Canadian and the other as European.

Authorities said a final death toll would not be known for at least two days.

But a police official said Sunday his team had already searched through all the submerged coaches.

Police Commissioner Philip Kilonzo said many more survivors may have walked away from the crash scene.

The bridge, battered by floods caused by force unseasonal rains, collapsed under the weight of the train.

A quick-thinking ticket inspector yanked an emergency cord and uncoupled three coaches as the locomotive and the front coaches crashed into the river.

One coach teetered on the remains of the bridge halfway between water and land.

TBILISI, Georgia (AP) — Dozens of people have been killed by snowstorms and avalanches that hit southern Russia and neighbouring Georgia, officials said Saturday.

Sergei Shogin, the head of the Russian Government Committee on Emergency Situations, said nearly 40 people have died in North Ossetia, an area of the Russian northern Caucasus.

"We have found 17 bodies and I know that another 19 people have died," he told the Commonwealth Television.

A succession of six massive avalanches, caused by thawing snow, hit the Trans-Caucasian Highway in North Ossetia Wednesday, about 50 kilometres southwest of the region's capital, Vladikavkaz.

Mr. Shogin said four rescue teams were trying to reach two groups of people who remained stranded on the road. One group included 44 people, including eight wounded, and another 150 people, he said.

Because of bad weather, helicopters could not reach the survivors, the television reported.

In Georgia, government spokesman Revaz Egadze said that five people in one of the villages in Dusheti region were killed by an avalanche Thursday, and more than 100 people have been evacuated.

Parliament spokesman Ramin Chelidze said that two people

Austria, Finland and Sweden to begin talks on joining EC

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Community (EC) launches negotiations Monday with Austria, Finland and Sweden to admit them as its first new members since 1986.

The talks, taking place in separate but parallel meetings, will be launched at a televised ceremony in keeping with a new openness in EC policies.

The plan is for the three countries to join the EC fold by 1995. Norway is expected to join the talks in a few months' time.

The discussions are likely to be dominated by farming north of the Arctic Circle and the question of the applicants' neutrality. They will cover 29 different areas from EC law to plans for European

union with a joint foreign and security policy.

The talks are expected to be less difficult than they might have been because much of the groundwork has been done in years of discussion on the European Economic Area (EEA) linking the EC and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), to which the applicant countries belong.

EC foreign ministers must also agree Monday on how to adjust the EEA accord to exclude Switzerland, whose voters rejected it in a referendum in December.

The EC's External Relations Commissioner Hans Van Den Broek warned the applicants last week not to be too optimistic

about the speed of enlargement talks and said a long delay on the EEA could affect the membership discussions.

Spain is not satisfied with technical adjustments its EC partners want to make to the accord to take account of Switzerland's withdrawal.

Madrid is expected to press its demands Monday that the six EFTA countries joining the EEA make up the Swiss share of a fund intended to help poorer EC states.

Belgium told other members last week it would need until the end of the year to ratify the modified accord, which everyone hoped would be in place by July 1.

Ukraine to triple fine for drunkenness

KIEV (R) — The cost of getting drunk is to triple next week in central Ukraine's Khmelnytsky district. The fine for Khmelnytsky residents who get hauled into the sobering-up station or "medical sobriety centre" will rise to 1,000 karbovanets — less than a dollar but one quarter of the monthly minimum wage. The Ukrainian News Agency said Friday. "Should persons requiring this service, or their friends or relatives wishing to take them home, also need transport, that will cost an extra 200 karbovanets," the agency said. In the capital Kiev, the cost of a night in the drunk tank is even higher at 2,000 karbovanets. The sobering-up station or "vytrezvitel", an institution devised in Soviet times to combat the chronic problem of alcoholism, offers cold showers and a hard bed to inebriated "customers" brought in off the streets by police.

Annie Oakley's rifle is up for sale in London

LONDON (R) — A Winchester rifle used by Annie Oakley, the legendary American sharpshooter, is expected to fetch up to £25,000 (\$38,000) when it is auctioned by Christie's in London on March 24.

Oakley used the rare smooth-bore rifle in Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show, staging dazzling shooting displays that included hitting coins thrown into the air and firing at targets behind her with the use of a hand mirror. The gun was a gift to the vendor's grandfather and bears the inscription "presented by Annie Oakley to W.R.C. Clarke, 1891", testimony to the friendship between Oakley and the British family whose country seat is in Shropshire, western England. Oakley struck up a friendship with the Clarkes when the Wild West Show visited Europe in the 1880s and she regularly joined the family to hunt gamebirds on their estate, Christie's said. The British public fell in love with Oakley and she put on a special show for Queen Victoria's golden jubilee.

COLUMN

Iran to hold fashion contest

NICOSIA (R) — Iran, where women have to cover up from head to toe in public, will hold an international dress design contest next month. Tehran Radio reported. The event is part of an exhibition on the status of women in Islam being held to mark the 14th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, it quoted organiser Shahla Habibi, President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's adviser on women's affairs, as saying. The exhibition at Tehran's Contemporary Arts Museum from Feb. 2 to 12 would also include films, photographs, a review of Iranian women's clothes in the past 200 years and a "chastity feast", the radio said without elaborating. Iranian women are required by the country's Islamic laws not to show more than their face and hands in public or wear clothes that reveal the shape of their bodies. Permissible outer garment fashion ranges from chador — a sheet of often black cloth slung over the head and reaching the ankles — to loose smock and large headscarf. Hundreds of women are rounded up each year for flouting the dress code and punished by flogging, fine or just a reprimand. But there is no restriction on what may be worn under the chador or smock. Iranian women's magazines print do-it-yourself dress patterns taken from Western publications, with the models' heads blotted out apparently to discourage foreign hairstyles.

Catholic nun ordered out of Texas town

EL PASO, Texas (R) — A 68-year-old Catholic nun ordered to leave town within 48 hours because of a feud with local church officials led the deadline pass Friday without budging from her convent.

Sister Rose Michael Jbara said the ultimatum issued by El Paso Bishop Raymond Pena was "a tragedy and unlawful." "I don't let anyone push me around," said Sister Jbara, who has lived in the Loretto Convent in El Paso since 1967. "They can't force me out." A spokesman for the diocese, the Rev. Ed Roden-Lucero, told Reuters the nun had been asked to leave town because "Sister Rose Michael has a history of making rather serious and outrageous accusations against people in the diocese" and said that recently she staged a public demonstration accusing church officials of heresy.